

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED ARTS VIENNA

MATTERS OF THE TONGUE

theoretical background of creating a food object-experience out of multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory possibilities

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Table of Content

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Taste as a power relation.....	6
Food as a performance medium	9
The first milestone - The rotten clay embryo	10
Inspiration I : Good taste in Art - Pasta paintings, Oka and Fitch.....	11
Inspiration II : Let's go Back to School, Sonia Verguet	12
Inspiration III: Posterity of the Sun, Sonia Verguet.....	14
Theory of Taste	15
Inspiration IV: Pampada, Andreu Carulla Studio.....	16
Inspiration V : Sharing Dinner, Marije Vogelzang.....	17
Inspiration VI: Eat-It, Dephine Hugeut.....	18
Taste the abstract.....	19
Matters of the Tongue	22
4 + 1 basic tastes.....	22
Sense of taste and function	22
Tongue papillas.....	22
Taste buds.....	22
Functions of receptors.....	23
Taste and temperature.....	23
Hot is not a taste stimulus.....	23
Textures.....	23
Sense of smell and aroma / sex & crime.....	24
The resulting performance: Matters of the Tongue.....	24
A final comment	24
References	26
Table & Sources of Figures	27

Abstract

A look at the theoretical background leading up to the creation of a trans-disciplinary and multi- sensory performance. Research into possibilities of creating a food object-experience. The performance combines a variety of textures, tastes, and their relation. The artist boards on the verge of taste and surreal experience in a traditional setting.

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My greatest gratitude goes out to those people who are closest to me, words cannot express how grateful I am to, my sister who always finds time to proof read and help me through the jungle of words and who is generally just amazing, my mother who has supported my creative approach to life in all stages and for her unconditional love and my mother's partner who is just such a practical, kind help in all situations life has to offer. And at the end I would like to express my appreciation to my wonderful partner who calmed me down (if necessary in Spanish) when I was running in circles, and for his whole being that enriches my work and life so much.

Introduction

Ever since I can remember, food, as a living matter that can change shape, taste, and texture when it undergoes a variety of processes, has fascinated me. Discovering the endless methods and ways food can be used - be it chewing, cutting, composting or the changes it undergoes when heat or cold is added - I have been left in astonishment ever since I stopped drinking my mother's milk. Be it out of my deepest survival instincts or my experimental approaches towards living matter - food and its complexity has always accompanied me in many different ways.

The multidisciplinary nature of food studies that explore relationships among food, culture, and society creates a wide range of methodological approaches. The sheer endless variety of food matters shapes our lives on so many levels, including at a certain conditioned, cultural level. The performative patterns of reappearing food rituals, be it food in the context of survival or as a part of social context, create layers of meanings and value.

In particular, I am fascinated by TASTE, and the processes of arranging, defining, creating, and destroying this have captured my imagination. 'Mixtures', as I would call them as a child, were my favourite experiments. There was a rather unpleasantly behaved child in my neighbourhood who had the 'pleasure' of getting introduced to my so-called 'mixtures'. I used to mix all kinds of special things together and leave them in front of this kid's door - anonymously of course. Already back then I found the task of arranging tastes in such a way that they would result in a new odour and taste, particularly created for that occasion knowing that it would transport a certain message, very appealing.

"Mixtures", a way of creating a statement, explored between 1991-2000, reenacted in 2015



Fig.: 1,2

The multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory possibilities available when creating a food object which can be internalized and externalized in a way that can reach out to all the human cells in different ways, from the inside, is very intriguing to me.

Taste as a power relation

Taste in its gustatory sense and pleasure from food consumption are generally seen as social and cultural phenomena, moulded by their relation to the environment, economy, and health. Tasting cannot be taken out of social context or hierarchy and is imprinted deeply into the society it belongs to. Taste can be seen as a , "biological response and organic attribute of foodstuffs and can induce humans to act"¹. Rethinking taste can provide a framework for rethinking the relationship humans have with nature, by emphasizing the very limits of human control.

Taste is, in most terminology, a thing of choice and preference, which in relation to food can also be described as our culinary electoral behavior developed throughout our life. Taste does not always have anything to do with actually tasting something per se, but is often connected with the experiences that shape our sense of taste. The conditioning of preferences and aversions already start to develop early on. During its development in the womb, the foetus' head is one of the first body parts to be more defined. This is why all the sensory organs of this particular area such as the eyes, ears, nose and tongue are also established very early. The very first taste buds appear in around the 8th week of gestation.² Aroma compounds in the amniotic fluid stimulate the foetal taste receptors as soon as the foetus starts swallowing which is around the 12th week. Once a human being is born the sense of taste is one of the first experiences that we encounter, amongst breathing of course. The point being, once a flavour of food is accepted, aside from sweet taste that is already experienced in the foetal and newborn stages, this can influence our preference and acceptance of new flavours of food. The terminology for this is the so-called 'flavour-to-flavour-learning'.³ New taste stimuli are more likely to be accepted when combined with known dishes and tastes. Often it does not matter whether a food was the actual cause of a negative reaction, but if the sensory properties of a food are linked with negatives sensations, be it nausea, vomiting or emotional pain (such as your favourite bunny and friend being killed and cooked for dinner), aversions against certain foods develop and may remain for the rest of one's life.

¹ cf. Bethaney Turner, M/C Journal, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2014) – "Taste"

² cf. Menella JA, Beauchamp GK. "The Early Development of Human Flavor Preferences"

³ cf. Birch LL, Fisher JA. "The Role of Early Experience in the Development of Children's Eating Behavior"

The phenomenon of aversions to certain foods can be observed in cancer patients for example - often their treatments cause nausea, vomiting, and many more unpleasant sensations. Most likely many of the patients will develop aversions towards food consumed during their treatment, although the food eaten and tasted in this period of their life did not causally contribute to their nausea etc. The way our culinary horizon develops, and therefore our taste, is somewhat linked to the moment of time we first experienced a taste or texture.

The sensory experience of tasting can open up possibilities, but taste itself is not the only important thing. The second and intrinsic intertwined matter is aroma. Seventy percent or more of what we think is taste is actually catered for by our sense of smell. The tongue tastes only sweet, sour, bitter, salty, umami, and sometimes even fat, and feels - soft, hard, crunchy or liquid. It is the odour molecules that make us experience most of the taste. The sense of smell falls under the most primal of sense organs (noted as early as Aristotle, as will be mentioned later), and yet is very complex. Much is unknown about how exactly we detect and discriminate between various odours. A very interesting factor to take into account is that aroma is received differently and triggers different parts of the brain, depending on the situation of the person smelling it. A simple example: a baking apple pie is received differently and sends different messages out to the body if the person is hungry or if they have just had a seven course meal.

Not only aroma, but also the stimuli of hot, cold, burning, sharp, and bubbly play an important role. They are not directly linked to the taste but are sensations of the trigeminal nerve and are extremely important in the experience of taste/flavour. If a piece of food lands in your mouth, after you have decided it smells good and appeals to you in looks, then our inner database will wait for the first reaction to make sure the first smell/looks impression is correct. Then food is either well received as something tasty, or rejected as something disgusting.

The hard wiring - Becoming a chef (2008-2010)

As an apprentice of three restaurants I started to become a so called 'real' chef. Tasting was no longer a task of enjoyment or pleasure, it became a job that needed to be done whenever necessary. Tasting, preparing, and learning new compositions, composing combinations in a way that would not only please my own ideas of good taste but the undefined 'majority'. The disconnection from my own favourite flavours gave me the opportunity to explore and experience a different approach to taste-making. This, in retrospect, was a necessary process towards introducing 'taste' itself as a possibility to transport and create a meta-meaning.



Fig.: 3,4,5

Food as a performance medium

Lindenfeld and Langellier state in this quote the relation between food and the performative act:

To perform food is to behave, to present the self in a daily life by acting out and within the repetitions of habits and rituals, and in accord with protocols and poetics as instructions for doing something: how to make and eat food, how to make and do food. To perform food is to make a to-do food, to show the processes and products of cooking and eating and offer them for evaluation and appreciation in a movement toward the theatrical and spectacular. As doing, behaving and showing in ordinary and extraordinary acts, food and performance are embodied and visceral – the charged ingredients of survival and pleasure, of nourishment and nuances of taste and power relations.⁴

The line between food as an artistic medium and food as a culinary medium is fine and probably "most pronounced in live performance, particularly performances involving actual consumption"⁵. The tools used to distinguish and analyse food as a performative medium sets the angle of the analysis. The terminology borrowed from the culinary world or from the art world have certain connotations that might fail to grasp the ambiguity. For each new performance or piece of art I can feel that even though I have both backgrounds, in the culinary world as well as in the artistic world, those two sides still struggle to come together as one. My personal goal is to create time-based art that is an integral part of everyday life and accessible to a wide public, presented through food, a powerful and relevant medium that plays an essential part in survival. Not only as a culinary practice but as an artistic production that can open up new insights and possibility to internalise and externalise information with a multi-layered connotation.

[...]the boundaries of food in culinary settings and its use as an artistic medium [are blurry and bendable]. I want to suggest that food can serve as an example of the need to rethink our ideas about what constitutes art, how we assign value, and how we form a division between art and life, and between artistic medium and craft⁶

When I say food as a medium, I wish to distinguish this from those artists who use food as a subject, e.g. a painting of a fruit bowl by Frida Kalho.

Yeal Raviv states the following in his essay, Eating my Word: Talking about Food in Performance:

⁴ Laura A. Lindenfeld & Kristin M. Langellier, "Introduction", p. 2

⁵ Lindenfeld & Langellier, "Introduction", p. 2

⁶ Yeal Raviv, "Eating my Words: Talking About Food in Performance", p. 9

...not only to create delicious food, but also to do so in a way that alters our perception, confounds our existing notions, and expands the way we view the world. Preparing food is most often a craft: sometimes a craftsman can be extremely skilled and produce breathtaking creations. The distinction here is between those who use food as a material and those who use it as a medium. The same distinction applies to artists: those who use food as a subject or material and those who use it as an aesthetic medium.[...] artists who use food as a medium to rethink their work, they also highlight the need to acknowledge food as an aesthetic medium and the importance of developing a way of thinking and interpreting projects in which taste, smell and texture play the central role, of developing work that leaves no trace to contemplate later, work that is perceived subjectively and unique to each audience member.⁷

The first milestone - The rotten clay embryo

Personally I see this as the first milestone on my way to conducting my artwork as I do now. Not the work itself, which was quite mundane, but the thought processes that came into being with it are essential for my work today. My first contact with food as a building material; in this case only the structure and texture were important. The piece was left unattended for 2 weeks and started to decay. This transformation changed my whole perception of my former idea and transformed all my further approaches to any artistic work. The work turned into a photographic documenting of the breaking up and disposing of the red gelatine uterus with a clay embryo.

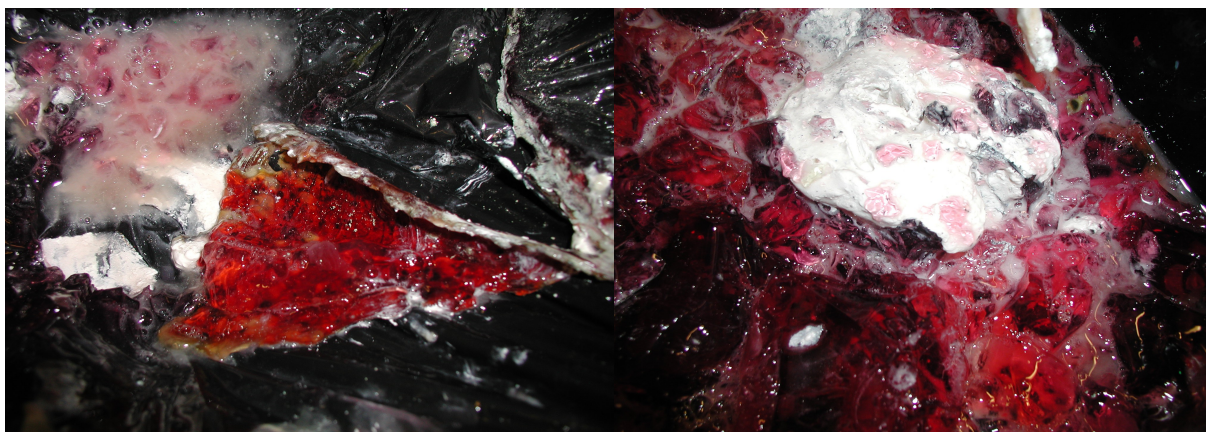


Fig.: 6,7

⁷ Yeal Raviv, "Eating my Words: Talking About Food in Performance", p. 30

Inspiration I : Good taste in Art - Pasta paintings, Oka and Fitch (2000)

Guests assemble to view a show of paintings. Once a painting was purchased it was brought to a vat of boiling water in the middle of the gallery, cooked al dente and transformed into supper. Oka and Fitch is an artist collaboration between Dough Fitch and Mimi Oka, who met at a cooking school in Paris. They create food experiences known as 'Orphic Feasts'.

Mimi Oka's career included financial arbitrage, cooking, writing and theatre production. Dough Fitch worked in the fields of theatre, opera design, architecture and furniture design. He has also written a book entitled 'Organs of Emotions', in which he explores the notion of redesigning the human body based on emotional logic.



Fig.: 8,9,10

Inspiration II : Let's go Back to School, Sonia Verguet (2014)

Designer Sonia Verguet was asked to organise a brunch in the garden of the school where she studied. Her thought was to be inspired by the work she used to do in the school environment and prepare food that represented certain types of paper she worked with. She used white food items such as celery, radish, tofu, rice, meringue and coconut, that could be painted with food colouring and glued with honey.



Fig.: 11



Fig. 12

Inspiration III: Posterity of the Sun, Sonia Vergaut (2012)

Sonia Vergaut was asked to design the food for the exhibition "Posterity of the Sun". The exhibition features pictures of the artist at work, as well as finished artwork. Vergaut took the same approach in her display of the food, arranging it on lighted boxes in order to show a side of fruit and vegetables that people had never seen before.



Fig.: 13

Theory of Taste

The hierarchy of the senses can be evaluated by the necessity of survival. First there is sight, which can be stated as the most important sense insofar as it allows gathering of information solely on its own. But it needs to be mentioned that there is no sense that is fully adequate by itself. Even hearing is as important as vision, smell, tactile qualities, and taste in food. Also to mention is the so called 'common sense' which is responsible for relating all data from the senses together.

Aristotle investigated different living creatures and the hierarchies of their nature, and according to him touch is the lowest, in the sense of most primitive, sense organ. In his opinion taste comes second lowest after touch as it is connected to such a primal function of survival, simply because one needs to nourish him or herself. Aristotle labels the sense of taste as a variety of touch that serves nutrition. Very interesting is how he explains that the method by which both senses work is the same, in terms of the contact between the sense organ and the sensed object.⁸ In regard to this, Caroline Korsmeyer notes the following:

There is some ambiguity in Aristotle's treatment of this matter; the tongue is referred to sometimes as the organ of taste, sometimes as the medium. The skin similarity is treated ambiguously as the organ or medium of touch. It is necessary that the object of taste dissolves slightly before the taste sensation appears; but while the sapid object must be moist, water is not itself the medium of transfer for sensation. Strictly speaking, according to Aristotle, the tongue is an internal medium for taste and flesh is the internal medium for touch.⁹

It is furthermore interesting that eating a moderate amount of food could be seen as making a "virtue of necessity"¹⁰. Basically "...one must eat in order to live"¹¹. Aristotle was also very intrigued by the psychology of pleasure¹² in his ethical theory, "including pleasure and pain of the senses; and the development of a virtuous character requires learning to manage pleasure and pain so that one is pleased by the right things"¹³.

The English term 'taste' has had several meanings in its history, all of which relate in some way to the idea of intimate acquaintance with an object by means of one's own sensory experience. Precursor terms include usage that means to touch, to smell, to test. Also relevant is the fact that a 'taste' of something has a quantitative connection - a very small amount, one

⁸ cf. Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Making Sense of Taste" p. 20

⁹ Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Making Sense of Taste" p. 20

¹⁰ Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Making Sense of Taste" p. 23

¹¹ Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Making Sense of Taste" p. 23

¹² cf. C. Korsmeyer, p. 23

¹³ cf. C. Korsmeyer, p. 23

that requires careful discernment even to notice. And, of course, 'taste' also refers to personal dispositions and preferences, as in the expression 'to have a taste for' something, whether a food or an activity or a type of object. The sensation of fasting seems to carry a virtually inescapable affective valence; tasting involves registering the sensation as pleasant or unpleasant. Therefore this sense provides a suitable analogy for judgment of the quality of experience by means of immediate subjective approval¹⁴. Whether taste is a function of rational faculties or of sentiment is a matter for debate.

Inspiration IV: Pampada, Andreu Carulla Studio (2012)

Carulla wanted to create a new piece for the Eat Art gallery, which specializes in art related to gastronomy and haute cuisine. The gallery invited Andreu Carulla to create something for the exhibition called "Disculpture". He wanted to create something new with functional aspects. The lampshades he created fitted his own criteria as well as the theme of the exhibition. Currently there are only fourteen "bread-lights", several of which are hung in a restaurant, and the rest of which are showcased in the exhibit called "Tapas- Spanish design for food".

Andreu Carulla Studio is a design studio located close to Barcelona. The founder Andreu Carulla Callis has a wide range of approaches to his work. From the most technical design to a more conceptual and experimental approach, he tries to form an emotional link between the design and its consumer.



Fig.: 14

¹⁴ cf. C. Korsmeyer, p.40-41

Inspiration V : Sharing Dinner, Marije Vogelzang (2005)

Asked to design a Christmas dinner, Marije Vogelzang thought of a simple idea to break the clichés: she hung up a table cloth, cut strips into it and the only way to access the table was to stick your head through the table cloth. The food was also part of the project. One person was served a slice of melon on a plate that was cut in two and the person sitting opposite was served two slices of ham on a similar plate. The combination was so classic that people naturally started to share.

Marije Vogelzang specialized in Eating Design after graduating from the Design Academy in Eindhoven in 2000. She also works as a consultant for the food industry and gives lectures all over the world. Her work has been published in magazines like the New York Times Magazine and exhibited, amongst other galleries, in the Axis Gallery in Tokio.



Fig.: 15



Fig.: 16

Inspiration VI: Eat-it, Dephine Hugeot (2009)

"Eat-It" is a notepad of thin sheets made of 100% fruit, inspired by the model of Post-It Notes. It is meant for office workers who might like to play with their supplies and nibble on them. Dephine Hugeot, a graduate from the design school ESAD (École Supérieure d'Art et de Design) in Reims "approaches food design as a sensitive evasion, sometimes shocking but always delicious".

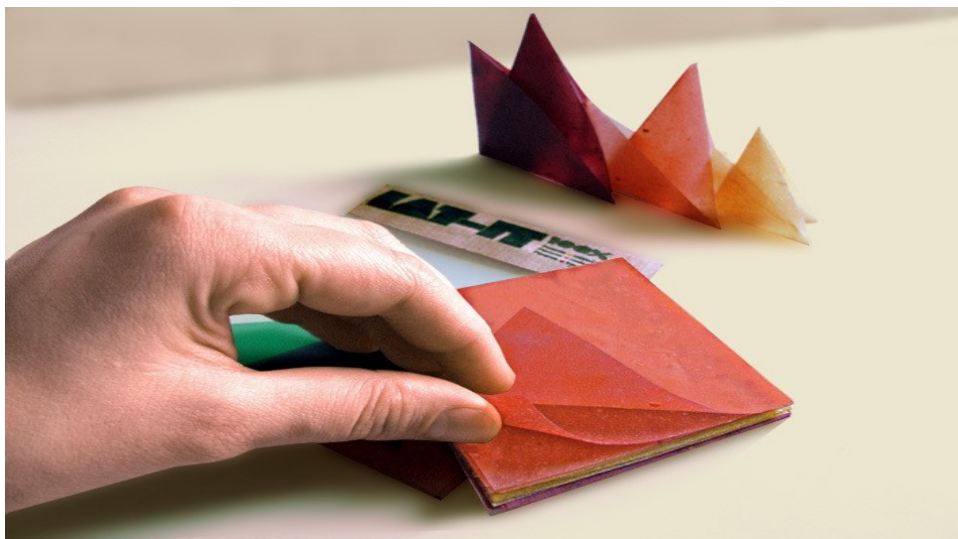


Fig.: 17

Taste the abstract (2014)

Installation, participatory performance, Martina Lang

The module “Taste the abstract” took place at the BIOSPHERE n+1 event on the 23rd of June 2014 as a part of a collaboration between the Phd students of the BOKU's program DoKne and the Art & Science Department. The one year of collaborative work lead to many interesting outcomes and involved many projects concereng the topic of sustainability. I was part of a group exhibition but was also inspired to present an individual work that showed my approach to the year of work together.

The Project description as stated on the website of the Art & Science Department:

Envisioning a sustainable future of our planet leads to many attempts to integrate scientific disciplines and respective research methods. Biosphere 2 was a living model world with the aim to study the interactions between humans, farming and technology. The ecological experiment was implemented in the 1990s in the Arizona desert and tried to build a closed, independent system that resembled the most important factors of Earth's ecosystem. Compared to today's fine-tuned computational models, which are used to understand, simulate and control real-world systems and tackle transformation towards sustainability, the project of Biosphere 2 can serve as a model for an experimental and performative mode of living that dreams of new ways of doing the natural and the social. The cooperation between students of the Art & Science master's programme and the Doctoral School of Sustainable Development uses Biosphere 2 as a starting point to develop a transdisciplinary play that enacts “biospherian” versions of sustainability.¹⁵

My goal was to transform theses into taste experiences. Eating and tasting were used as tools to internalize a theoretical piece of work into a bodily experience. The main focus here was on the taste and how the taste correlated with each written thesis. Participants had the chance to discuss the tastes and interpret the experience. Within the group an open free associative reflection was started on the basis of the taste experience and the transformative process of re-digesting knowledge.

¹⁵ Project discription: http://artscience.uni-ak.ac.at/jart/prj3/art_science/main.jart?rel=de&reserve-mode=active&content-id=1348219249457&projekt_id=1399369163897

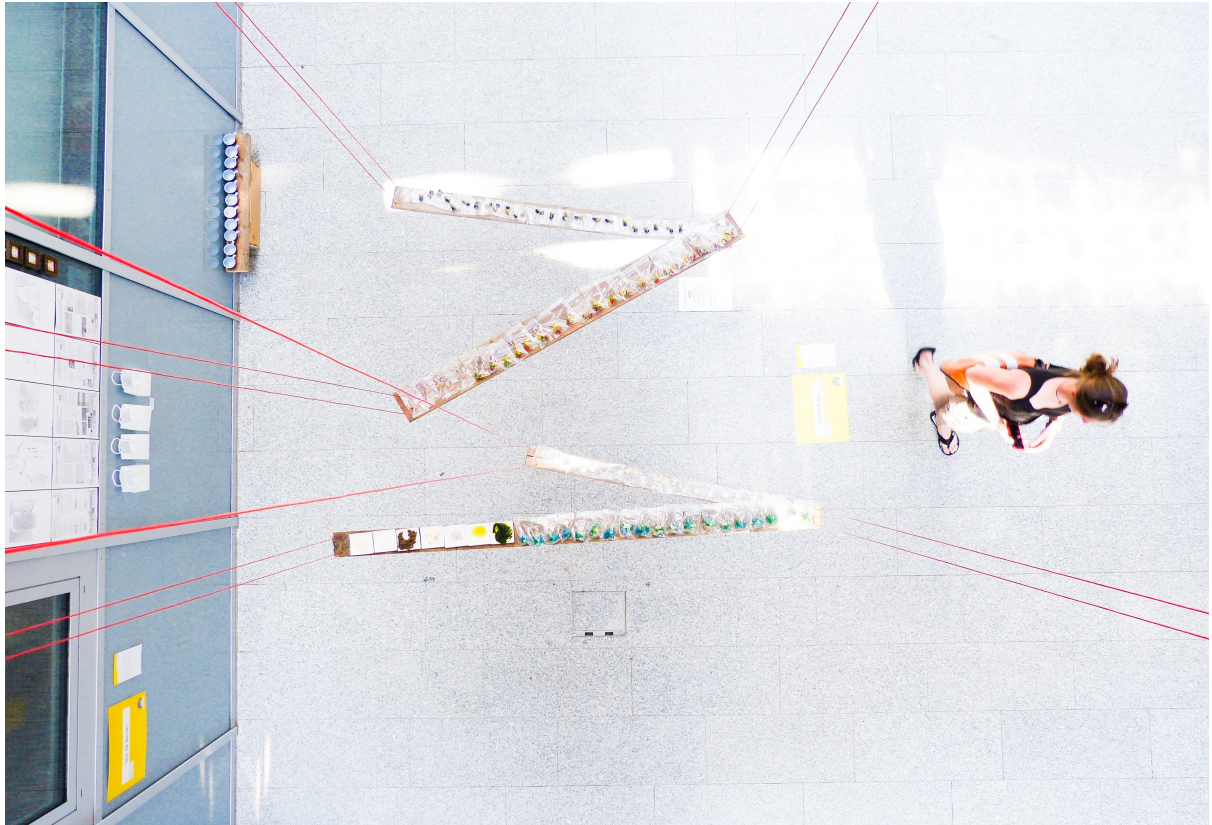


Fig.: 18



Fig.: 19



Fig.: 20,21,22

Matters of the Tongue

In my interest for taste I cannot go further until I have explored and highlighted some details about the human taste organ, the tongue, and its abilities, since everything is connected to it.

4 + 1 basic tastes

Until the beginning of the 20th century there were only 4 basic tastes established: sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. The fifth taste, also known as 'umami', a rather undefined taste for the 'moreish-meaty' tastes, was discovered by a Japanese chemist and therefore been named 'umami' which is Japanese for 'pleasant -tasting'.¹⁶ Interestingly, only in 2011 research has found that the tongue also has taste receptors for the 'fatty taste', therefore for fatty acids. One thing that is still being discussed among researchers is if there is such a thing as a 'watery taste'. The Thousand Fly is the only insect known to have a perception of a watery taste, but there is still the possibility that humans do too.¹⁷

Sense of taste and function

Evolutionarily speaking taste buds were necessary to survive. Sweetness meant a lot of energy. Umami taste tells the body that there is a high percentage of protein in the food it was getting and the salty bits included many minerals. Sourness warned of unripe fruit and therefore of care needed in handling. Bitterness usually exposed poisonous foods. Over time the taste buds learn to accept also sour and bitter, but if you offer those tastes to a small child which is still much more connected to the survival mode, they usually refuse food with these particular tastes.

Tongue papillas

The strongly structured surface of the tongue allows a very sensitive ability to taste. The stimulus of taste is noticeable very quickly in the body, and is only present for a certain amount of time. The structure of the tongue as seen with the naked eye consists of many tiny papillas of various different shapes and sizes across different parts of the tongue. Unlike earlier studies claimed, there is no such thing as a 'taste landscape' throughout the tongue, which means there is no particular area of the tongue dedicated to taste only a one flavour¹⁸.

Taste buds

Taste buds themselves are located in the walls of those above mentioned papillas. They consist of various sensory cells that are arranged in segments. Every sensory cell is connected

¹⁶ cf. Vierich/Vigils, "Aroma, die Kunst des Würzens", p. 10

¹⁷ cf. Vierich/Vigils, p.13

¹⁸ cf. Vierich/Vigils, p. 11

to several nerve fibres that are directly linked to the central nervous system, which in turn send the signals to the brain. Only when the signal of the sensory cell arrives in the brain is the actual taste as we know it defined and translated.

Functions of receptors

The function of those taste receptors is a very detailed and complicated matter. Generally speaking, a taste gets noticed through very specific substrates which are contained in the food we apply to our taste buds. The substances get dissolved via our saliva and flushed past the receptors in our mouth until they randomly pass the right receptor for their taste and start docking there. But only if the right receptor is found you taste something, like the key-lock principle.

Taste and temperature

The intensity of taste depends on the temperature at which you taste the food. The term 'thermal-taste' derives from the fact that soups which flavour up nicely at a hot temperature can taste bland and unspectacular when cooled down. This can be explained by the fact that salty and sweet are the two tastes where intensity rises with temperature, unlike bitter and sour, which tend to decrease their flavour. However, above 40 degrees Celsius taste perception gets covered up by the receptors of heat perception. Another very simple aspect of taste and temperature is the difference between hot and cold in general. With hot and cold, not only the actual temperature is important but also hot and cold taste experiences like spices such as chilli versus the herb mint, hot and cold respectively, which activate the same trigeminal nerve.

Hot is not a taste stimulus

The taste of hotness such as chilli, pepper, ginger etc. is not a taste experience but rather a pain stimulus. You experience this stimulus through the ends of the trigeminal nerve. Our whole body is of course connected to all the nerve endings that are responsible for feeling pain, which also has an effect on our sensation of heat and cold. For example, chilli not only burns on our tongue but also our hands - or eyes if our hands come in contact with them after cutting fresh chilli - and can create a harsh stinging pain paired with heat rushes.

Textures

Texture includes all effects that are embodied in the physical structure of food. It can be defined via clear physical parameters such as hardness, viscosity, water content etc. Our brain transforms these physical qualities into individual sensations. If you eat something fresh and

crisp, for example: within a hard shell you first cannot experience any flavours. On the tongue such food will feel nonelastic, edgy, and rough. Such food is compact and can be moved around as a whole in the mouth. Saliva will not get through the hard shell of the foods at first and you will not taste anything for the first moments. Only when you crush and chew it the food cells open up and aroma and flavour becomes accessible. In this context it is important to mention that most foods do not only have one texture but many components that make up the whole experience.

Sense of smell and aroma / sex & crime

One of the most important aspects of taste is the smell, the aroma. Before food enters your mouth the nose already judges if the dish smells pleasant, familiar or unusual and assesses any memories, associations, and emotions connected to the scent. Chewing a mouthful of food opens up the possibility for the retro nasal smell to combine with the actual tastes and aromas, and only then can it be experienced in its full sensual complexity.

One side detail that I find particularly amusing is something I read in the book "Aroma". Aromatisation of dishes and adding flavour is basically 'sex and crime'. Because most molecules that are responsible for amazing flavours serve the original plant either as an attractant pheromone for reproduction or as a weapon against enemies that would otherwise eat them.¹⁹

The resulting performance: Matters of the Tongue

The format of a performative installation for the experiential part of Matters of the Tongue came to me naturally. Not only does the matter of taste still have a vast potential to be philosophically and empirically researched, it also has possibilities to be experienced - aside, that is, from the survival instinct that makes us eat. Tasting by itself, taken away from the context of purely eating, can open up a sensory experience that is so subjective it can never be repeated. The 'nothingness' it leaves behind is also, in my opinion, breathtaking and crucial for my performance.

The starting point for the experience of matters of the tongue will be the 5 basic tastes and a game which involves relating them to each other. As complexity overrides the simple combinations of the basic tastes, we will enter more surreal possibilities of taste and its

¹⁹ cf. Vierich/Vigils, "Aroma, die Kunst des Würzens", p. 18

chaotic manipulations .

The artistic process of choosing the textures tastes and combinations is very delicate and an integral part of the creative performance. All of the stimuli provided will fall into place so differently for each and every participant that I am already looking forward to where it will lead to.

Participants of the performance will receive rules, orders, instructions, suggestions and directions of how the different stages of matters of the tongue should be approached and perceived.

The setting will play an anchoring role in the experience. While the tastes might be different to what is expected, the setting will be no different to what you might expect from a classy dining experience.

A table and chairs placed in a room will define the area of performance. Not only will you find a 'normal' dining situation, you will find a setting not shy of any cliché: flowers, candles, table clothes will round off the room.

A final comment

Exploring the way taste develops and forms within us, how it is moulded throughout our lives, and how taste as a sense works within us brought me to the conclusion that only by producing an experience, are others able to relate to how complex and intriguing the process is. Opening up different ways of internalising and relabelling knowledge was one of the key goals to my work 'Taste the abstract'. Now I want to go further in opening people's awareness of the tongue as a transmitter, a transformation tool, a detection device of reality.

Why is the setting important? As outlined earlier, all of the senses are involved in our experience of taste, including pleasant or unpleasant memories. I want to minimise pre-judgmental ideas by reinacting a well known setting, where people feel comfortable, before the actual process of tasting begins.

Introducing a certain type of structure, a game plan, to the taste experience is somewhat necessary to eliminate the factor of preference and choice, to a certain degree. I would not call it a game, but rather a game-ish kind of set up. When following directions, as I prefer to call them, the participants are relieved of the responsibility of choice, leaving them freer to focus on the tastes themselves. This is not a game producing winners or losers.

The preparation itself and the parameters of preparing the edible items are not as critically important in this particular performance as the subjective taste experiences themselves. The stages of preparation or selection of foods only serve to bring out the purest possible sample of each basic taste. The goal is actually to try and 'prepare' the foods as little as possible.

For me this is only the beginning. Researching taste and its bodily complexity has been a stepping stone, opening up a whole new field of artistic research committed to the field of preparation and taste experiences in a performative context. Matters of the Tongue has opened up so many more questions and possibilities that are calling me to investigate further. The performative possibilities of food matters and the depth of the 'a la minute' performance are fields I want to incorporate into my further research of food diversity and what makes it so delicious.

All proper scientific evaluation requires objectivity, and sensory science is no exception. This is difficult because our senses are, in fact, very subjective. Even every ingredient contains a wide variety of tastes and aromas that combine in different ways to create flavour. Taking the sense of taste to investigate more than only the food, elaborating a method of tasting that goes beyond food, is one idea I want to explore further.

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Table & Sources of Figures

Fig. 1: Mixtures, a way of creating a statement, photographic reenactment	5
Fig. 2: Mixtures, a way of creating a statement, photographic reenactment	5
Fig. 3: Photos of me working as a chef	8
Fig. 4: Photos of me working as a chef	8
Fig. 5: Photos of me working as a chef	8
Fig. 6: The rotten clay embryo, photos of the destruction	10
Fig. 7: The rotten clay embryo, photos of the destruction	10
Fig. 8: Oka & Fitch, Pasta Paintings, http://www.orph.us/pasta2/pasta4.html (1.1.2016).....	11
Fig. 9: Oka & Fitch, Pasta Paintings, http://www.orph.us/pasta2/pasta4.html (1.1.2016).....	11
Fig. 10: Oka & Fitch, Pasta Paintings, http://www.orph.us/pasta2/pasta4.html (1.1.2016).....	11
Fig. 11: Sonia Vergeut, "Let's go back to school" http://soniaverguet.com/wp-content/uploads/brunch1site.jpg (1.1.2016).....	12
Fig. 12: Sonia Vergeut, "Let's go back to school" http://soniaverguet.com/wp-content/uploads/brunch1site.jpg (1.1.2016).....	13
Fig. 13: Sonia Vergeut, "La Postérité du soleil" http://soniaetolivier.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/33.jpg (1.1.2016).....	14
Fig. 14: Andreu Carulla Studio, Pampada, http://www.andreucarulla.com/portfolio/pampada (1.1.2016)	16
Fig. 15: Marije Vogelzang, Sharing Dinner.....	17
http://www.marijevogelzang.nl/studio/eating_experiences/Pages/sharing_dinner.html#8 (1.1.2016)	
Fig. 16: Marije Vogelzang, Sharing Dinner	18
http://www.marijevogelzang.nl/studio/eating_experiences/Pages/sharing_dinner.html#8 (1.1.2016)	
Fig. 17: Delphine Huguet, Eat-It, http://delphinehuguet.com/category/eat-it-2009/ (1.1.2016)	18
Fig. 18: Taste the abstract, Photo of the installation.....	20
Fig. 19: Taste the abstract, Photo of a participant	20
Fig. 20: Taste the abstract, Photo of the tasting items.....	21
Fig. 21: Taste the abstract, Photo of the tasting items.....	21
Fig. 22: Taste the abstract, Photo of the tasting items.....	21

All Figures which are are not specifically assigned to a source are from the author itself.