

CONDIMENT

ADVENTURES IN FOOD AND FORM



ISSUE 02: QUESTIONABLE TASTE

What's Cooking?
Food, *Food*, and What They
Have to do With Art

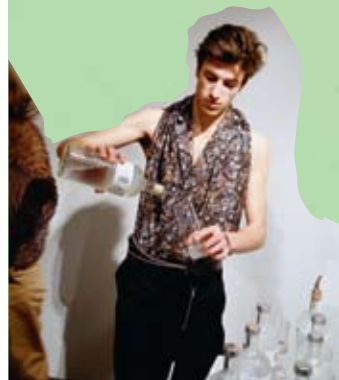
Walking Away:
First Steps Towards an
Expanded Gastronomy

Eau De Vie:
An Interview with
Christoph Keller

Chamber of Commerce Weather

Fresh Licks of Paint





SCANLAN&THEODORE







images by EVA-FIORE KOVACOVSKY

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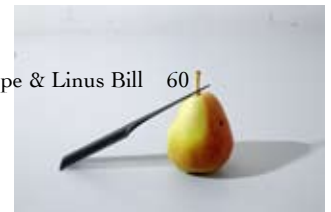
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QUESTIONABLE TASTE

This issue of Condiment has reminded us of the simple truth that we are living with food, not living for food. In this context, the aim shifts from accomplishment to a need for further exploration.

Ideas and approaches to food have never seemed so evolved and exaggerated. Yet, as the focus on the meal continues to increase, we risk forgetting about all the hours of living that exist inbetween.

Rather than only being an object of desire, food needs also to be a subject of discussion—approached not as a statement about politics, provenance or proficiency, but as an open-ended question mark.

In some form or another, we hope that each page of this issue raises questions—not just about what food is, but about what it can be. After all, each meal is both an outcome and a new beginning.

Chris Barton and Jessica Brent



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exploring wine

Mendoza, Argentina



WHAT'S COOKING? FOOD, *FOOD*, AND WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO WITH ART.

by TARO E.F. NETTLETON

With the recent reissuing of the complete catalogue of *Avalanche* magazine, the time seems ripe for another consideration of Gordon Matta-Clark and his milieu of the 1970s. The last big moment in which the artist received concentrated attention was nearly a decade and a half ago. In 1997, the Whitney Museum of American Art held a retrospective nearly 20 years after his death in 1978. It made perfect sense in the late 1990s to carry out a large-scale exhibition of Matta-Clark's works because it was obvious that they'd influenced artists such as Jorge Pardo and Rikrit Trivanija, who were global art circuit darlings then. While concepts, such as social sculpture, post-minimalism, and context art — inherited from a previous generation of artists that included Matta-Clark — were evident in these 90s artists' works, curator and critic Nicolas Bourriand broke new ground in 1966 when he labeled them “relational art” and argued that they needed to be considered on their own terms as a new development in contemporary art.

Put simply, relational artworks offered situations rather than objects of contemplation, and social rather than private experiences. Theoretically, these social relations would form a community, albeit a small and temporary one; Bourriand calls them “micro-utopias”. In *Untitled (Still)* (1992), one of the most representative works of relational art, Rikrit Trivanija cooked and served Thai curry in the main exhibition space at 303 Gallery in New York. The detritus left after the cooking and eating was left as is and exhibited as part of the performance cum installation cum sculpture. Bourriand historically contextualizes relational art by giving, for instance, examples of art works that “provok[e] and manag[e] individual and group encounters.”¹ Trivanija's *Untitled*, for example, can be said to shape social encounters because



gallery visitors dining together are much more likely to engage in conversation than in a traditional exhibition of, say, paintings hung on a wall. Among the important historical precedents to relational art that Bourriand gives is *Food*, a collaborative art/business project and restaurant opened by Matta-Clark, Caroline Goodine, and others in the heart of what is now SoHo on 127 Prince Street at the corner of Wooster in 1971. Another is “dinners organized by Daniel Spoerri”²: a Swiss artist associated with Fluxus, an international group of artists who aimed to blur the boundaries between art and everyday life, privileging ephemeral works such as multiples and “events”, i.e. performances based on instructional texts, over traditional fine art pieces such as painting and sculpture.

In an essay regarding Bourriand’s theorization of relational art, critic Claire Bishop writes in a footnote to her consideration of Trivanija’s *Untitled*, that; “If one wanted to identify historical precursors for this type of art there are ample names to cite.” For her, the “type of art”, of which Trivanija’s works are examples, is one that makes a critical intervention in the exhibition space and shapes the kind of social relationships that might unfold inside it. Therefore, she starts her list of precursors to this type of work with Michael Asher’s work of 1974, in which he “removed the partition between exhibition space and gallery office.” Strangely, this example ignores the role of food making in Trivanija’s work. Her examples, however, quickly shift to those of artists, including Gordon Matta-Clark (and *Food* in particular) and Allen Ruppersburg, whose works include *Al’s Café* (1969), which looked and felt like a typical American diner, but offered strange dishes such as “simulated burned pine needles a la Johnny Cash, served with a live fern,”³ who “presented the consumption of food and drinks as art.”⁴

Still, the explicit reference to food remains in the footnotes and is acknowledged only reluctantly, as if to say, “If one wanted to”, one could talk about food in art, but Bishop would rather not. She goes to lengths to point out that audience participation, not food, is Trivanija’s primary interest: “... Food is but a means to allow a convivial relationship between audience and artist to develop.” Bourriand himself concludes his brief discussion of historical food-related works by asserting that, “The constitution of convivial relations has been a historical constant since the 1960s.” While artists of the 1960s and 70s were interested in “broadening the boundaries of art,” he argues, for artists of the 90s “the issue no longer rests in broadening the boundaries of art, but in experiencing art’s capacities of resistance within the overall social arena.”⁵

I don’t doubt that food is a great social conduit, but it’s hard for me to imagine food as only that, as Bishop claims regarding Trivanija’s *curry*, or that it was merely an art-historical exercise,

as Bourriand suggests regarding Matta-Clark et al’s *Food* and Spoerri’s dinners. As someone who is interested in cooking (and eating) as much as thinking (and writing) about visual culture, and as a co-publisher of a zine of art criticism and vegetarian recipes [*Let Down*], I feel that there is something special, even magical about food. Postalco’s *Recipes - Alchemy for Food*, excerpted in the first issue of this very magazine, explains, “18th century chefs made furnaces like the Alchemists and tried to extract the purest essence of a food.” It isn’t simply the idea of creating an undiluted essence, though, that food preparation and alchemy have in common. In cooking, when ingredients are prepared properly, the resulting dish is much more than the mere sum of its parts.

Food isn’t simply magical either. Peter Kubelka, creator of *Arnulf Rainer* (1960), known as the first flicker film (a film constituted by alternating black and clear frames to create flickering light), and *Schwechater* (1958), possibly the most beautiful and least successful beer commercial ever made, argued in a lecture entitled the “Edible Metaphor”, that food is the oldest communication medium known to humans. What capacities, to borrow Bourriand’s phrase, might this medium have for resistance in the social arena? Kubelka suggests that food is both real and metaphoric. For example, he suggests that fermented foods such as sauerkraut are metaphoric because they speak of the passage of time. Food is also real in that it can be consumed for nourishment. Moreover, in contradiction to Bishop’s limited reading of food in terms of its capacity to produce conviviality, he suggests that food represents the most basic human relationship to the environment. Things, he says, do not come and let themselves be eaten. Cooking thus requires an active interpretation of our world and a faculty for future-oriented thinking. Imagine, for instance, the leap of imagination it took to see the thorny sea urchin as edible matter. In a very basic sense, cooking entails a desire to change the world. It might even be considered the very basis of social change.

Kubelka argues that making food out of the stuff that surrounds us requires analysis and synthesis – the principles of critical thought. Etymologically, “analysis” means to loosen and take apart, “metaphor” to transfer. Our surroundings, which initially present themselves as a unified whole must be parsed out and separated into the edible and inedible. Increasingly, this analytically process has taken on ethical dimensions, for example, in terms of ecology or animal rights (while these issues are beyond the scope of this essay, I point them out to show that to suggest that cooking is somehow less than political is absurd). Finally, in cooking, we transfer the edible parts of the world and synthesize them in new combinations.

Food, the restaurant, not only served affordable, frequently vegetarian food to artists, but also hired those same artists to



help support their artistic production. Not simply an effort to rework the definitions of art, it was an economical and political action taken to make art-making possible. The most striking image from *Food* is no doubt Richard Landry's iconic photograph of Tina Girouard, Caroline Gooden, and Gordon Matta-Clark in front of *Food* (1971). Matta-Clark stands with his left hand on the opened shutter that's been padlocked to the column. In his right hand is what looks like a can of beer. His hair is longish and unkempt. Dressed in a plain t-shirt, dark jeans cut slightly too short, just above the ankles, and what look like Converse "Skid Grips," he would fit just as well in today's Lower East Side. Matta-Clark's extended left arm is echoed by Girouard's right hand, which points to something outside the frame, suggesting that *Food* is a project that continues beyond its four walls. Gooden, sandwiched between Girouard and Matta-Clark, holds a set of keys in her hand. My guess is that this is a pre-*Food* moment (the awning above Girouard, Gooden, and Matta-Clark's heads advertises "COMIDAS CRIOLLAS" or Spanish-American Creole food, a remnant of the space's previous life), and that they are about to go in to renovate the space. Matta-Clark's left foot floats in the air, as if he was just about to put his weight on the gate to push it all the way open. The image communicates something more than resistance; it's a picture of potentiality and the desire for change, the very things that food and *Food* tells us makes art worthwhile.



NOTES

1. Nicolas Bourriand, *Relational Aesthetics*. 30.
2. Ibid.
3. Allan McCollum, "Allen Ruppensburg: What One Loves About Life are the Things That Fade."
4. Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." 56.
5. Bourriand, 30.

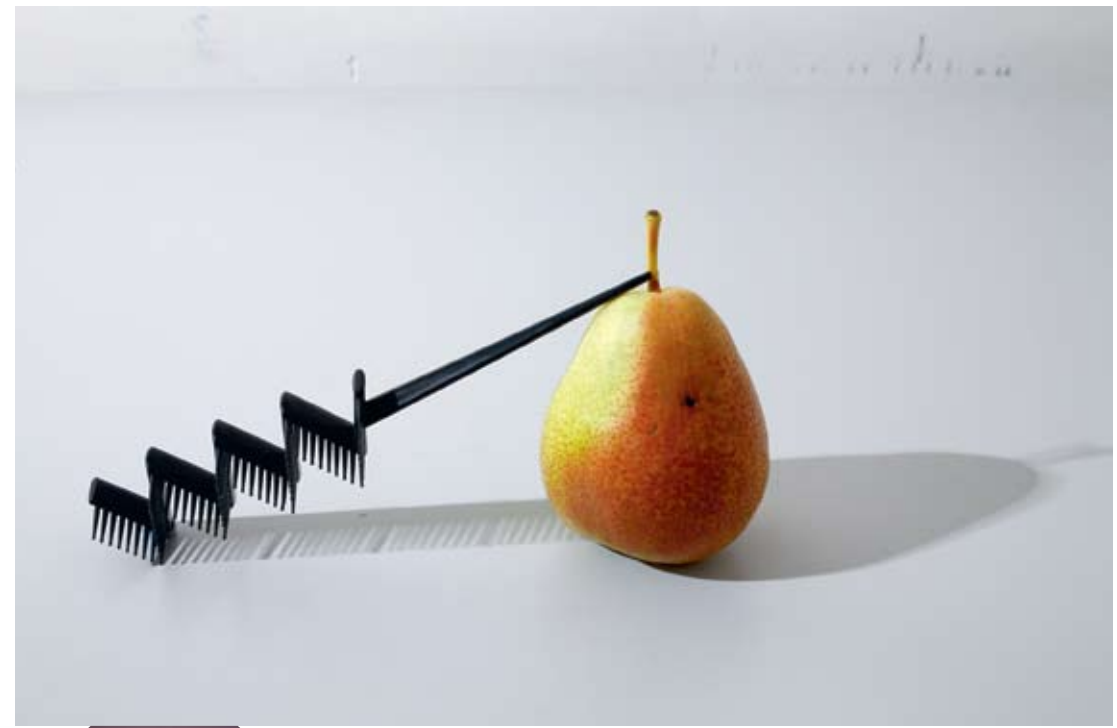
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A NOT B

photography by UTA EISENREICH







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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WEATHER

by ELLEN BIRRELL

I had no idea about Chamber of Commerce weather until we bought the farm. Today is April Fool's Day and, as I write this, the land around me is lush and lustrous with radiant light, fragrant with orange blossom and jasmine. Spring, here in the rural hinterlands north of Los Angeles, is a feeling every morning that the world is created brand new, filled with the positive presence of being-here-now. There is no memory in this, just a busy happy energy. It is Chamber of Commerce weather, good for picnics, postcards and realtor's open houses, not great for farming if it goes on too long.

Last winter was, by any local account, exceedingly odd. It featured the lowest rainfall on record and the worst freeze in over twenty years. January, usually a wet month, just brought bitter cold: five nights of temperatures well below freezing. On our farm, the lemon orchard on the west end got hit worst. It is a leaf shaped plain, some of our lowest lying land.

* * *

When I moved out here, the layout of the west end orchard immediately struck me as eccentric. Orchards are planted in efficient parallel lines overlaying whatever terrain is arable. They are like planned communities: order *uber alles*. Here, almost all of our orchard acreage is laid out parallel to the river that marks our northwest boundary. But on the west end, the orchard lines have been rotated to a jaunty and seemingly arbitrary diagonal across the plain. Now, if you're going to the trouble of imposing some sort of parallel order on an organic landscape, why would you rotate the rows in one area differently? Some past steward of this land exercised plumb line logic only to a point, and then decided that she liked the straight lines of the orchard better turned just so? How very odd. At least that's what I thought until the freeze.

Liking it just so. That's the kind of landscape thinking I associate with Saturday afternoon garden design. Keeping a garden in the city was always about the fantasy of a nature tailored directly to me, especially in Los Angeles where the "Mediterranean climate" has permitted many years of plant importation at the expense of

the scrubby chaparral native to this land. In LA you can create a horticultural masquerade of any corner of the temperate globe, or, even better, the many parallel universes of temperate globes possible in the marriage of the individual imagination and the Home Depot plant section. You like roses and I like cacti, or maybe both, as a former neighbor of mine in town does, creating a previously unknown eco-niche where cacti and roses intermingle, thorns revealed as their true communion. It is a familiar story about LA, usually told in architecture or film history, but equally true in gardens. I played this game with pleasure as an urban farmer – the summer tomatoes I planted in town, preferably exotic heirlooms, were always both earthy and flavorful but also about the fantasy of the earthy and flavorful, the fantasy of "farm fresh" and natural.

The real farm has a much more austere logic. At a very base level, it is mercenary. Even a small farm like ours requires a huge amount of labor and patience and luck. A successful orchard is result of daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, ruthless diligence, and a rather spectacular arrogance that says: I will optimize this plant's condition at the expense of all other life on this square of earth. Why? Because the farm's productivity is what pays me to do this, and from that first principle come all other benefits, the romance that brought us to the country – the earthy yearning for the pastoral, clean air, quiet, privacy, a slow stewardship of the earth that feels ancient and familiar, a kind of visceral home coming.

* * *

We grow Eureka lemons, one of those many plants imported to California in the last 200 years.¹ Eureka's are very strange plants indeed, for if you plant the seeds of one of our lemons, you will not get a Eureka lemon tree. You might get something more or less like one, but most likely, it would be very much less like one than you would want. Since commercial farming is built on the assumption that the lemon you find on the shelf today will be the same as the one you will need tomorrow, and so on, all year round, you can't be allowing for a plant's idea of creative reproduction! The ruthlessness of the farmer to cultivate just this plant at the expense of all others is only the final step for a plant that is, actually, a frankenfruit, and all the plumb line logic and the ramrod straight control of the farm starts way before we get anywhere near that plant in this ground. Someone – maybe wearing an immaculate white lab coat, or more likely, dirty bib overalls – figured out that in order to get a consistent market lemon, you must take the roots of one kind of plant,² and graft on to them the bud wood of a different kind of plant, a very different kind of plant indeed: not simply a specific variety of lemon, but a clone of someone's ideal commercial lemon, guaranteed to produce exactly the same kind of lemon over and over and over again.



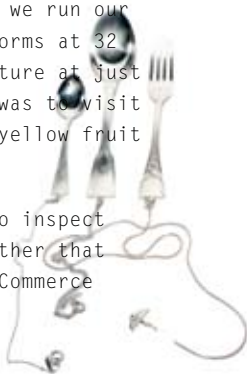
In the history of agriculture, ends always justify means. After all, there is no need for empathy with a tomato. Played out in bodies, the methods and permissions common in agriculture rain horror on human history. I think of race purity and anti-miscegenation laws, gas chambers, closed borders and ethnic cleansing – all symptoms of a paranoid and terrified human resistance to change and hybridity. Agricultural history is the mirror image of this sanguinary trail of tears, just upside down and backwards, for agriculture has embraced any and all of these repressions in the service of its twinned practical and mercenary ends: food and commerce. Genetically modified foods, corn fed beef,³ Dolly the cloned sheep, and yes – even the dependence on migrant farm workers who have no legal sanction – are all excessive symptoms of agriculture’s pragmatic ends justifying whatever means.

* * *

You know the story of Chicken Little: its central figure a chicken that runs around yelling, “the sky is falling, the sky is falling!” After living on a farm for a couple of years, I can tell you that Chicken Little is a farmer. The sky is always falling for farmers because there is so much they can’t control, not the least of which is the weather. Excesses of any kind are bad: too much rain, too little; too much fruit, not enough; too many bugs but no bees; too much wind or not enough when the temperatures drop. The margins of profitability for the California lemon crop are now so narrow that the only hope of substantial cash flow is at the expense of someone else’s fallen sky. A blight in Florida, a freeze in Spain, a bug in Central America, a killing frost in the Central Valley – farmers survive on each other’s disasters and anxiously await their turn. Five nights in January below 25 degrees was ours, or nearly so.

Cold air is heavier than warm air and therefore pools on your lowest land – here, the west end orchard. In the old days, farmers would burn tires or smudge pots on cold nights, but because of air pollution, there are now only two legal methods of dealing with a freeze: run your irrigation system or install wind turbines. There are turbines in some of the orchards here, but there is no evidence that they have been used in the last forty years, nor are there any in the west end block where they would be most useful. So we run our irrigation for five nights. Sprinklers help because ice forms at 32 degrees, protecting the plants by maintaining the temperature at just that point. Walking the west end every morning that week was to visit some fantasy ice palace, all glassy buttresses embalming yellow fruit and fresh green leaves.

In the week after the freeze, our packinghouse rep came to inspect the damage. My love commented gratefully on the balmy weather that had succeeded the frost, but our rep snarled “Chamber of Commerce



Weather – we need rain!” He left us with dire predictions about the west end, and said it would take some time to really tell. But when he returned a few weeks later to do an official analysis, he was much more encouraging. In fact, he got downright sunny talking about how badly the Central Valley and Santa Barbara County lemons had done. He scheduled a pick and said we would do well this year, because the price of lemons would surely rise with supply so tight. As he left, he remarked that whoever laid out the west end orchard really knew what they were doing. He explained that the odd diagonal orientation of the orchard – what I had dismissed as eccentric – was exactly calculated to funnel the cold air draining down from the canyon above, moving it efficiently across the plain and off into the river below, keeping that orchard just slightly warmer.

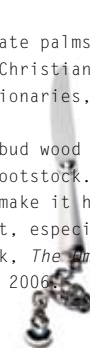
As I finish this, it is another Chamber of Commerce day. Sunny blue sky with just a few decorative puffy clouds – sun warm, shade cool. In short, another perfect day to sit out in the garden and encourage the heirloom tomatoes. Even so, I admit I am worried. We had less than three inches of rain this winter and there is none in the forecast. The hills are summer dry and the cattle have already overgrazed whole sections of the upper range. The irrigation in the groves is running all the time. Our foreman who has tended this land for many years just shakes his head when asked about the summer ahead.

You know the sky is falling.



NOTES

1. Lemons, oranges and date palms, and other things like typhoid and Christianity came to Alta California with the missionaries, up the Camino Real.
2. In California, lemon bud wood is typically grafted onto an orange rootstock.
3. For a read that will make it hard for you to buy anything in a supermarket, especially beef, please see Michael Pollan’s book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Penguin Press, New York, 2006.



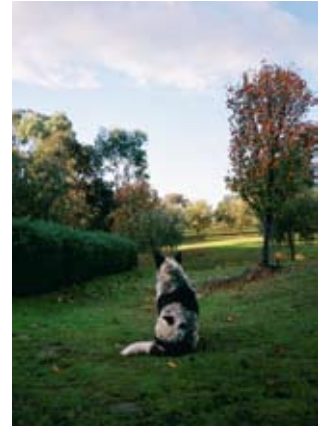
Hippie Hint No.142

Paint your kitchen
a wild assortment
of colours so you
can recognise it.

words by SHAUNA T.
image by MISHA HOLLENBACH



WINTER OLIVE HARVEST







Food for thought.

Port of Call table
designed by Dhiren Bhagwandas
for Native Collection One.

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NATIVE

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DAILY HARVEST BAG

The Daily Harvest Bag is an outcome of a few lessons we learned while olive picking with friends on a farm in Kangaroo Grounds.

Luxury can come from the freedom to pick and choose, or the relief of not having to choose at all.



WALKING AWAY:

FIRST

STEPS

TOWARDS

AN

EXPANDED

GASTRONOMY

words and photographs by CAMERON ALLAN MCKEAN



THE SNAKE BY CHOI HYUN SUK

EVEN AFTER HER HEAD WAS SLICED CLEAN OFF
THE PREGNANT SNAKE THRASHED AND THRASHED.
ON CUTTING HER WOMB OPEN,
SHE FINALLY LAY DEAD.
BUT HER CHILD REARED UP FROM HER
ALREADY ALIVE
ITS GAPING MOUTH MOVING TO BITE
THE EXECUTIONER'S HAND.

WHAT VIGOROUS, CLEAR HOSTILITY!
MY ADMIRATION FOR ITS INCREDIBLE ENMITY
URGED ME TO SHARE ITS POWER
AND SO, GRILLING IT OVER A FIRE,
I ATE IT.

The Snake by Choi Hyun Suk, from a reprinting of *KUKA*.
(Independently published in Japan sometime before 1965)





Without knowing exactly how we would get there we began walking towards the source of the Tamagawa (Tama river). Tokyo has three “Class 1” rivers: The Tamagawa (138km long), the Arakawa (173km), and Tsurumi-gawa (42km). The Tamagawa is the most social of the rivers, it has a rich history and is the most frequently used. Its banks, lined with sports fields, fishing spots, public farms, and gated homeless communities, are constantly filled with Tokyo residents making use of the city’s largest zone of free space. To be beside the Tamagawa, is to be outside of everything Tokyo typically represents.

The water cuts a jaggy path from its source—an artificial lake called Okutama—to its mouth near Haneda airport where it opens out into Tokyo Bay. We began here, watching planes taking off for Seoul, Singapore, Okinawa; places you can’t walk to.

I wanted to walk up the river as a means of researching this writing. But I did not really know what I was researching, or exactly what the point was. I only knew that I was interested in ideas around survival, endurance, and eating poorly. I was interested in how those ideas took root in the brain and what their value was. I wondered, “could eating poorly have some function?” And I also wondered, “what information can travel between my brain and a meal?” Watching footage of Chinese performance artist Tehching Hsieh living outside for a year in New York¹, thinking about the mentality behind ascetism, and considering the potentialities for new forms of desire which science fiction author J.G. Ballard realised²; all of these inspired the poorly planned walk. Maybe that makes it seem too orchestrated. Really, it was just that the peak of an oppressive summer in Tokyo made any form of escape seem noble and necessary.

We are now walking; up concrete paths, past fields, under bridges, and we are saying good morning to old men, and watching a remote controlled helicopter crash into the water. We pass the homeless congregating by the river, or we pass evidence of past congregations (they are occasionally forced out of makeshift homes by new river infrastructures and official warnings). In the afternoon some men playing Mahjong invite

us to fish (or maybe rest) beside the river. And then, after that, at the end, we sit on a concrete embankment and light a fire and cook: a tin of tomatoes, a packet of noodles. And we wait while chocolate bars solidify in the river.

In the end, after walking for two days, we (I walked with a man from Australia called Mark Drew) would be lying motionless in the shade of an oak tree, bleeding, sunburned, and confused. Defeated. And the only thing I could think of, apart from watching for lingering snakes, was the meal I had eaten the night before. It had built a fantastic structure in my brain. This is what this writing is about.

* * *

We have eaten many things as humans. Knowingly, we have eaten fish, herbs, the soft and wild meats, the primitive meat (the meat of other people), poisonous things, dirty roots, leaves, fruits, and plants. Unknowingly we have even eaten the imputrescibles—chemicals and plastics. We have, at certain times (and places) in history, eaten not simply because we need to be satiated, or because we want to optimise our physical condition, but because we want to taste something new, desirable, or evocative. We call the act of tasting ‘gustation’. Pleasure, taste and food; what links them are our mental associations; pleasure in the brain is often generated by associations.

Many people have explored the potentialities around taste and association. The most involved exploration over the past fifteen years was undertaken by the molecular gastronomists and their progeny. Molecular gastronomy is the science of gustation; it applies scientific discoveries and methods to food preparation and taste. The French physical chemist, Hervé This, is generally credited as the movement’s father; he coined the term with the publication of a PHD through the University of Paris in 1996. But the popular leader of Molecular Gastronomy is Ferran Adrià, head chef at elBulli in Spain, regarded by the British magazine, *The Restaurant Magazine*, to be the best restaurant in the world in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Adrià did horrible, unnatural, things to food—put it in vacuum chambers, blasted it with gases,



melted it, reconstituted it—and he did so to generate new tastes through careful, precise science. But his restaurant is no longer the best in the world. That honor goes to one of his ex-staff, René Redzepi, who runs Noma in Copenhagen. Redzepi moved away from the stuffy science and explored a different aspect borrowed from elBulli: extreme localisation.

Redzepi says: “A significant number of our ingredients cannot be bought from the store or ordered in. They have to be foraged from the parks, woods and shorelines around the city. Other things came from further away. I studied recipe books and nature books, learned about wood sorrel and ground elder and particular kinds of seaweed to be plucked from the shore. We also developed a network of professional foragers.”⁵

Focusing on localisation is a natural reaction to the virtuality of the world. We hold that which we can see and touch much closer, we celebrate and fetishize it. But taking an ever narrower view, perhaps experience itself is much more important. We did not come to forage locally beside the river, and neither were we interested in taking what we found and physically recreating it later (as Redzepi does for Noma diners after he forages); we came to walk, something with fundamentally divergent goals, what we did was the antithesis of recreating the natural world, or meddling with its molecular guts.

* * *

We woke at 5am in a playing field 2km north of Futako-Tamagawa. It was one of Tokyo’s hottest days on record and in the heat we were confused and walked off the path into deeply overgrown bush. It was here that we confronted the snake in the undergrowth; a two-metre long brown snake, and rather than killing it with my bare hands when it struck (as I had imagined, when preparing for this scenario) I jumped into the river, and this began our final moments with the Tamagawa; one hand carrying packs above our heads and the other holding a stick to ward off river snakes. We tried many times to cross to the other side but it was too deep. “It’s far over your head but you can try”, said a man fishing with his family on a concrete tetrapod. I went deeper until the water

touched my neck and my snake stick floated away, and it was at that moment that I first thought back to the sweet metallic ring of the canned tomatoes, the slightly undercooked instant noodles and half melted chocolate bar, and tried to understand the new structure which they had built in my brain.

What exactly was built? As I ate, electrical signals would have been lighting up in a very specific region of my brain—the orbitofrontal cortex. Taste has many residences in the brain but this one is the most interesting; it is a key part in the brain that tells us when we have eaten something pleasurable or unpleasant. What makes the orbitofrontal cortex special are its shared functions. It houses a nexus of receptors for smell, taste, touch, seeing and emotions; it tells us to feel good about the grass under our feet (once the sun set we took off shirts, shoes and socks), to feel unpleasant about the smell of the polluted river (the Tamagawa has sewerage pumped into it, raising water temperature and allowing the survival of alien species such as piranha), it also tells us that we don’t recognize the face of the fisherman below but that, because of his insouciance, we can relax around him. It even influences our emotional responses. All these sensations are being electrically coded in the same place, sharing energy, and perhaps sharing information, too. We know from perceptual and cognitive psychology studies in the 90s that taste is influenced by much more than our taste buds, it is influenced by how a food feels and how it looks and how it smells. It is also influenced by memories.

If taste is mimetic, then it can absorb associations (like all the sensory things we experienced on our walk). I believe the molecular gastronomists feel that food and taste are deeply mimetic—that we can mould them to make them what they are not. But why not work the other way, by simply adjusting our brains before we eat, rather than adjusting food and hoping for a reaction in the brain? If we can do this, then we can build meals around days, weeks, and years of experience, crafting dense, overlapping opacities of sensory and emotional associations around specific foods and dishes, changing the way we perceive them forever (or at least for a week or two). Perhaps canned tomatoes become imbued with new,



ORBITOFRONTAL CORTEX: A BIOLOGICAL NEXUS FOR SENSORY PLEASURE

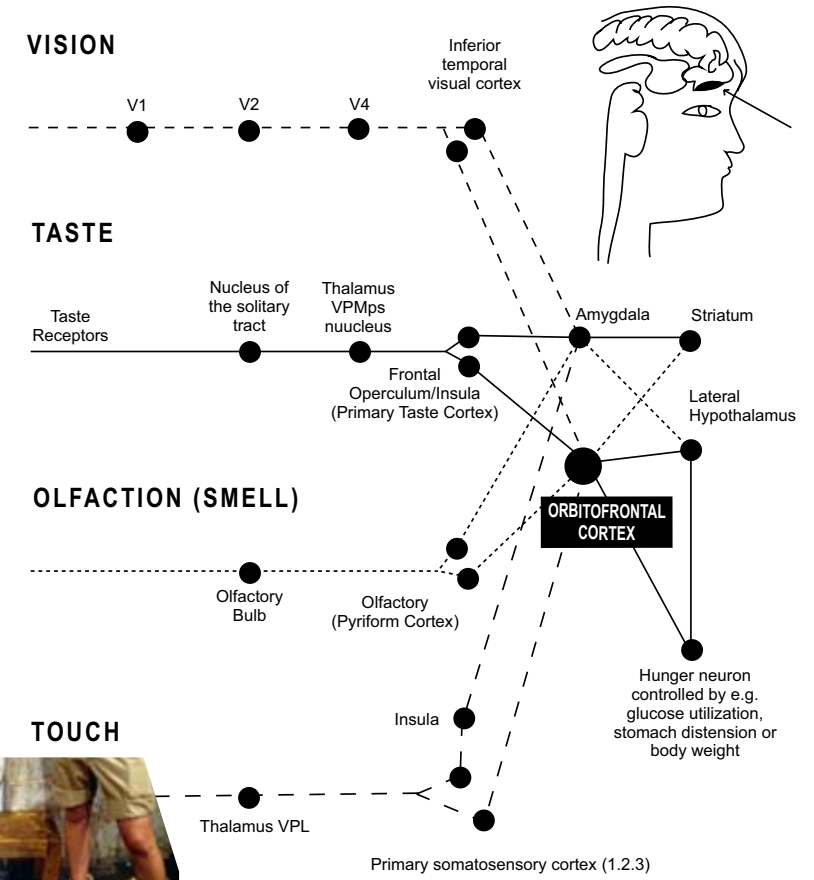


Image modified from: Rolls, Edmund T. (1999) 'The functions of the orbitofrontal cortex', *NEUROCASE*, 5: 4, 301–312

irrational memories of solitude and escape (as they did for me, for a while), or the gassy smell of eggs evoke notions of spiritual possession, or the burn of *Yuzu Koobo* on your tongue wells up feelings of ennui and confusion.

Chemical and molecular science did not free food through molecular gastronomy, it tethered it to technology and abused it; a fearful overwrought approach to food. A less rigid approach might be to use knowledge from the quasi-material and non-material sciences (e.g. cognitive psychology and phenomenology) as a means of reconfiguring our mental schemas around food. These sources might best direct us on changing the human mind to make food taste newer and richer. Contemporary art has overcome the gallery and the museum, why can't contemporary cooking overcome the kitchen and restaurant? If it could, this would be an Expanded Gastronomy, and would open up new possibilities and understandings for what we have traditionally referred to as "cooking".



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NOTES

1. Tehching Hsieh, *One Year Performance 1981—1982* (Outdoor Piece).
2. J.G. Ballard, *Crash* (1973) and *Vermillion Sands* (1971).
3. 'Interview: René Redzepi', *The Guardian*, Sunday April 18, 2010.
4. 'Piranha's Stalk Japan River', *Al Jazeera* English, October 18, 2010.

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EAU DE VIE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CHRISTOPH KELLER

Christoph Keller founded the publishing house Revolver in the 1990s. It grew to be one of the most prolific art book publishers in Europe. As his time in art circles went on, his interest shifted away from urban centres, and he moved with his family to rural grounds near Lake Constance in the south of Germany. Here, he began distilling schnapps in 2005. He named the distillery Stählemühle after the property itself, a traditional milling farm with a history dating to the mid-18th Century.

Faced with the limitations of a small farm, this distilling project is not one of mass production, but instead one of limited output with great care and attention to detail, where quality is essential because quantity is impossible. Through fervent research, Christoph revived the production of traditional flavours of distilled spirits, using uncommon ingredients long abandoned or fallen from favour, while perfecting established schnapps standards. The abundance of medals in the store room attest to the success of his efforts.

This sense of preserving traditions runs throughout the property, where a row of rare breeds of apple trees neighbours a pen of otherworldly two-tone goats; a path of strange assorted berry plants sits alongside a flock of rare Croatian mountain sheep with black and white spotted faces. The sheep cannot be used for their wool, which is closer to fur, and the twenty we see at Christoph's farm are among roughly 150 of the breed that still exist. Equally, the fruits that line the property are far too low volume for commercial use. Their presence forms some kind of a simple record of their existence. And so Stählemühle begins to feel like an active museum, where tradition is both chronicled and enacted.

photography by LINUS BILL, interview by THOMAS JEPPE



TJ *Why return to the land?*

CK This is a big philosophical question. The funny thing is, we have digital media to transfer information anywhere yet, at the same time, there is an absolute migration from the land to the cities. None of the cultural production is happening anywhere else than in the cities, apart from some freaky projects.

Thinking of alternatives, I made a test with my family in 2002. We moved to a small island in Denmark called Bornholm where we lived in a house directly by the seashore, which was beautiful. We wanted to use this opportunity before our kids got too grown up and went to school.

The big question was whether we could work on cultural production away from the city centre. We found we could live perfectly and work perfectly from a totally remote place so we said, "Okay, in this case, we would love to leave the city" and

to offer our kids a different view on nutrition, the production of food, living with animals and a close connection to nature. Living with animals that you use—I'm not talking now about cats and dogs—this changes your whole perspective on life. Suddenly there is death, and illness, and responsibility, and care.

Before this, we lived in a rented apartment in Frankfurt and, you know, the heating is there, the rubbish is being picked up, you just pay your rent and that's it. You get totally lost in terms of taking care of your needs, like nutrition.

Coming to a farm, you live a different life, because we invest probably one and a half hours in each salad. You count together everything about producing food—planting, seeding, cleaning the earth—then feeding yourself also takes a lot of time in the end. In this situation, you start investing in these things. Not only your cultural habits and your intellectual habits, but also very plain habits of how to dress, how to eat.

But it's not a dogmatic thing. We're neither hippies nor green party people nor anthroposophical people, nor bio people. We're just interested in doing other things, and also changing the speed of life. There is a romantic part of the whole thing of course; that's clear. There's also a nostalgic part of it. I'm very much attracted by old things. Old habits, old ways of production, old ways of craftsmanship, old ways of building houses.

TJ *But then there is this crucial point – before you could make this shift, you had to ensure you could still be involved in cultural production, while being physically removed from the centres of cultural production.*

CK I really thought it would be more difficult, but it was not. If we assume that you have worked in some sort of cultural peer group, some kind of cultural constellation before, for ten years, then it's quite easy to stay in contact with lots of things going on. We decided that I would still do some books, still be involved in publishing and do some exhibitions, develop projects with people, so it was





clear there would still be some kind of link to the art scene, or however you want to call it.

Now it's loosening up. My interests are changing very quickly. For me it's more fun to harvest apples and take care of the animals than to go to the cinema. Culture, in a way, loses some importance if you move away from it. I mean culture in the sense of "High Culture". We have newspapers, and we can read about it, but it's not part of our lives anymore.

It's strange, it sounds so dogmatic, but as you have seen, we are not. We are not knitting our sweaters out of the wool we produce. It's not about autonomy. It's about slowing down, changing speeds.

For example, sometimes it's nice to be dependent on weather. When we're making hay, we have about five hectares to mow. I need a time window of at least four days of sun and so I'm always living with the weather forecast, looking at the sky. If there is this time window I can't do anything else, I have to go harvesting. It doesn't matter if I'm distilling, it doesn't matter if I'm doing books, it's just hay time. It's quite interesting when you're forced to do something by circumstances.

TJ It's another kind of thinking about the idea of the deadline.

CK There are also deadlines in agriculture. But it's not something you can finish, and when it's over, then the next one comes. Most of the projects come again every year. With the sheep, you have a lambing season, you have a season where you have to clean and cut the claws, you have a season where you have to shear, and it's always the same every year. They come back and back and back eternally, depending on weather, depending on temperature, and so on. It's quite a different rhythm.

Before, I lived in this art scene, which was a total hoax economically because it was project-based. You're doing a project one after the other. The project is calculated from the beginning and you get paid for it from one project to the next project. As an artist, the projects would be exhibitions and fairs, and so on. As a publisher, it's a book. As a curator it's one exhibition after

another exhibition. And in the end you write an invoice. It's all very short term. Even if you do a long project, you probably do a two-year project. Not many art people do longer projects, like, say, lifetime projects. As soon as we're talking about agriculture, we're talking about generations. If you're planting, for example, an elsbeer tree, it takes about thirty years until the first fruits come. So it's clear that if you plant this, which is work—and you know, planting a tree is not just digging a hole and putting it in—then you have to water it, care for it, cut the branches once in a while.

So going into agriculture is also going away from the very short-term project, and even sometimes away from economy. If you buy a small chicken to breed it is 2.5€. The value of a chicken is nothing, it's just a way to get eggs. It's neither a hobby nor economy, nor a project: it's just living with something.

TJ Evidently there are many layers to running a farm. How did you learn it all when you started with Stäblemühle?

CK As a publisher, I said it many times before that you always start reading first before you do a single thing with your hands. For the farm, it was all easy to learn. When we came here, we had this idea that we could maybe run a farm which is ridiculously small, with six hectares, which is a joke in Germany—you need seventy to eighty hectares to run an agricultural farm on an economic level.

Our idea was to specialise. To try to *veredeln*, to "ennoble", and to turn some fruit, through a process, into a luxury thing. The idea was that we could try to do this as two people with four hands, on this ridiculous-size farm, by having a certain knowledge. It's an economic idea of stepping back, really using your hands to manufacture something out of existing nature, and then, through knowledge, turning it into a product that is high-end.

TJ So that's where producing fruit spirits comes in.

CK The king of spirits really is the fruit brandy. There's no other spirit where you have this variety and these possibilities. The idea of drinking a

glass of apple brandy is to get the impression of standing under an apple tree, that at the same time is blossoming, is carrying fruit, and is starting to rot. Some kind of cycle of life, in terms of aromas. The full bandwidth of what an apple can be. This is the idea, it's pure sensoric experience. Sometimes for me it's totally enough to smell and have a little little sip of something, then I can keep the smell in my mouth, in my mind for a while, and that's fine. Until I smoke the next cigarette [Laughs].

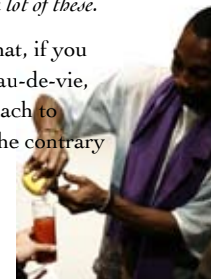
We don't call it schnapps in Germany, we call it *Edelbrand*, or *eau-de-vie*, to make this separation from what people usually consider as schnapps. I could call it schnapps, but this is not so clear, because the media in Germany in the last fifty years has displayed schnapps as something that is just pure alcohol, no matter what it is. It could be made from wheat, it could be vodka, it could be fruit brandy, it doesn't matter, it's just there to get drunk, and to strengthen beer for example. There's this thing in North Germany where you have a glass of beer and you put in a little glass of schnapps just to increase the alcohol. And that's the normal understanding of schnapps in Germany, besides the south. South Germany belongs culturally more to Austria and Switzerland. This is where this tradition of fruit brandies is.

TJ Do you get sick?

CK Never. "An eau-de-vie every day, at seven o'clock in the morning, keeps you away from all viruses" [Laughs]. No, but seriously, there's an old distiller in the village who actually is never ill, apart from having bad knees, and he's drinking a schnapps every morning at seven. I mean, I could never do that, to be honest. But he says it keeps him healthy.

TJ This seems to be a long running myth. There are endless studies that disprove one old belief about the properties of alcohol and prove another one, and vice versa, and so on. You must come across a lot of these.

CK One of the most obvious myths is that, if you drink a little schnapps, a digestive, an eau-de-vie, after lunch or dinner, it helps your stomach to digest. This is of course totally wrong, the contrary



is the case, because you make your stomach acids less concentrated. You thin the acids, so digestion gets more complicated for your stomach. On the other hand, it energises your blood circulation and that also helps with digestion, so it's a difficult myth.

The alchemist roots of it all are greatly bound to health. When distillation was developed, the first point was because of perfume production. It was not about drinking. The first distillations—we're talking about Arabia, Egypt, three thousand years before Christ—were very simple, not even using machines. There was a copper helmet that would collect condensation evaporation of alcohol.

It was all done for rosewater. In Arab countries, it was all about women being and smelling beautiful. This went on until early medieval times. It was only about catching smells. In medieval times, things changed a bit because then, suddenly,

distillation became the job of the pharmacists and the alchemists. It was not about producing alcohol. It was about finding the quintessence of life, the water of life, *aqua vita*. It was about finding the health formula, the key formula for everything, which was also connected to the search for producing gold.

Some of the interesting side-products of this alchemistic search for gold were porcelain and gunpowder which were both discovered through distilling. This went on until the 16th and 17th Century. Only then was it discovered that distilled alcohol is fun [Laughs]. And you can make money from it. So when I'm talking about distillation, it's also about this process, to really discover the quintessential form of things.

TJ So if the roots of distilling are coming from the development of a medicine, do those medicinal properties exist in eau-de-vie?

CK No, they have been disproven. There are substances that can be extracted, for example from plants, through distillation, which are then used in medicines. But when we're talking about normal fruit distillation or wine distillation, this is all about taste.

TJ I think it's also something to do with routine, no matter what it is, assuring your body that everything's okay.

CK My grandparents, swore by garlic. They would have a knob of garlic every day. They lived to ninety-eight and ninety-nine so there's something to be said for routine.

But for us, alcohol is not important. We would love to do spirits, eau-de-vie from fruit, without alcohol, if this would be possible. We just need the alcohol as the carrier for the aroma. The alcohol has the ability to bind aroma molecules.

So, distilling fruit has nothing to do with alcohol. For example, vodka is one of our biggest enemies. People who drink vodka are people who have not understood anything. The idea of vodka is pure neutral alcohol that tastes like nothing. Which is not a very interesting taste.

TJ But of course then there's this luxury industry that has developed around vodka.

CK Yes, there's a lot of money made with it, and it's a nightmare. Especially a lot of money made with very young people drinking vodka because it doesn't taste like anything. It's super cheap. You can make it for 60 cents a litre. It's very easy for people who have problems with drinking gin or cognac or fruit brandy, which have intensive tastes, because if you're young, you can't deal with intensive taste and so it's easy to swallow a lot of vodka.



People in my generation are all talking about whiskey, it's the big thing. In central Europe—it's true for the Swiss, it's true for the Austrians, it's true for the Germans—everybody is producing whiskey at the moment. You can get about sixty different Swiss whiskeys and in 2009 there was more whiskey imported to Switzerland than alcohol produced in Switzerland. They can read some books and talk about it, but whiskey has quite a limited range of tastes. I mean, a whiskey guy would say, "Oh no, it's a huge variety," but of course the original product is made from wheat or rye. The basis of every whiskey is grains. So the range is not as big as with fruit spirits where you can go from wild fruit, from berries to stone fruit, to southern fruits, citrus fruits—everything can be distilled. Everything can be totally different and have a huge bandwidth of aromas. So we're fighting against three things. We're fighting against vodka, we're fighting against whiskey, and this third thing we're fighting against is grappa.

TJ Really, grappa?

CK Grappa is like pizza. It's the production out of what's left over from pressing wine. So these are the three things that I'm trying to explain to people that are not interesting sensorically. There's no depth in these things.

TJ A friend of mine recently visited Champagne in France, the Chandon winery. There, they have 28 kilometres of underground storage. Well over a million bottles.

CK Not bad.

TJ Not bad, but at the same time, this is a luxury brand operating on a scale that almost goes against the idea of luxury.

CK This is one of the problems with the whole eau-de-vie scene. With distilling fruit brandies, there are a few big names known in Europe that people drink and think it's really good. It's enormous prices, absolute luxury goods, but still mass-produced, in almost industrial terms. If the people could be educated, they could find a lot of small distillers that produce five hundred bottles a year, one thousand bottles a year. It's an individual



approach and much more focussed on what they do. These are real luxury goods, real handcrafted material. It's just that they have the problem of how to communicate. Distillers in these villages, how should they communicate what they are doing? The internet has improved the situation a bit. If we had started our distillery ten years ago, we would have had no chance. You can't sit in a small village at Lake Constance and produce schnapps and hope to sell it.

TJ At the same time, more traditional modes of communication still play a role. For example, I understand that when you're seeking out a special plant or a special fruit that's hard to find, you place ads in the newspaper to find farmers who have the plants on their land.

CK Yes, that is true. That is the case for production, which is very much a local operation. But on the other hand our spirits are not made to be sold here in the village. We're looking for gourmets, or connoisseurs, people who are dedicated to these kind of things all over Germany. I would say all over the world, but we're restricted, we can only sell in Germany. Production-wise, it's a super regional thing. We can only produce twelve hundred bottles a year; more is impossible. So they need to have a price—we need to get 100€ for a bottle to make this thing work.

TJ You've said that, unlike contemporary art exhibitions, books don't need anyone to explain them. Could the same be said for eau-de-vie?

CK With eau-de-vie it's even better. With an art book, even if it explains itself, usually the necessity is that the people who read it need to have a knowledge of art history. If you take a conceptual artist like Jonathan Monk, it would explain itself only if you know, for example, Ed Ruscha's books. So there is this meta-level of knowledge, of art history, that you would need. With eau-de-vie, it's totally different, and for me that's the really rewarding thing. It is a matter of actual taste and nothing else.

You know, when I was doing art books, I couldn't show them to anybody from my family. They wouldn't understand. When I was starting at the

farm, working, sometimes my neighbours would come in—three metres in front of my office here is my neighbour's field—he'd stop his tractor right there and come with his rubber boots into my office, "Hey, what are you doing?" "I'm working on this and this book." He'd just shake his head and say "How can you make a living from that?"

With fruit brandy it's different. With my mother for example, I could never tell her what I am doing. I would have to start somewhere in the 60s, with the idea of artist books. With the brandy, it's totally clear. People try it and they can say they like it or they don't like it.

TJ So, the schnapps has an instant appeal, an appeal to the senses, but then you also run classes or seminars where people receive an education on the schnapps.

CK We're doing a lot of specialised fruit that people don't even know so before I can tell people about the schnapps, the taste, the aroma, I have to tell them about the fruit: where it grows, what it is, that it's a centuries-old mid-European fruit and it's always been there, that you can easily find it and it's very tasty and you can eat it this way, you can prepare it like jam, or you can try to conserve the aroma through distilling. It works as a primer for the senses.

With the nose, with the smelling, schnapps is very striking. When we're very young, we have more than one thousand receptors for various smells. By very young I mean only a baby. The problem with smelling is that it's immediately connected to language. You can only identify a smell if you have a word for it. You say, "Okay, this smells like a place where I have been already before" but it's still a language construction.

Usually we call smells after things we know. This smells like oranges, this smells like vanilla, this smells like chocolate. We don't have a real name for it, we name smells after things. This means that our brain has to do a lot of work in sorting those many hundreds of smells into terms. It's also one of the reasons why we lose all these smelling abilities. It's like a cash clearance inside our heads; the brain reduces the possibilities of smelling in order to make it quicker. Babies would be the

perfect people for tasting schnapps. They have still the full abilities in terms of flavour and smell.

Of course, if you're educated with eau-de-vie, you have another dimension. Although to be very honest, if you were to have a schnapps without a label, even with professionals, even with juries at schnapps championships, it's super difficult to identify a schnapps when they don't know what it is. Whether it's cherry, whether it's pear, it's very difficult. Actually, it is the label that explains what you have to look for in a schnapps.

Some of the spirits we do are very complicated. Like vogelbeer, they have a very complex aroma, they are not easily adapted. With strawberry, it's quite easy, it's also not so strong, it's quite a mild idea of an aroma. I have a few spirits that are only for experts. And it doesn't make sense to somebody who doesn't drink or taste eau-de-vie regularly. It's quite strange with these aromas, that there are these levels of difficulty. It's like a computer game.

TJ What are the difficult ones?

CK The difficult ones are all wild fruits. Like vogelbeer, wild plums, kornelkirschen, the wild service tree, cornelian cherry. Or elderberry, red elderberry. Black cherry, the hawthorn, the white bean berry... All the wild fruits have complicated aromas whereas the cultivated fruits usually have much easier aromas. The wild fruits keep their whole bandwidth of aromas because there's much more genetic information in the wild fruits than, say, an apple, a brand apple like a Golden Delicious. Because what you do with genetic breeding involves separation, you cut off the variety. You always strengthen one feature of the fruit.

TJ So how do these wild berries maintain their status as wild? Because surely they must be cultivated in order to have enough to harvest.

CK No, they are not.

TJ So they're really picked from the wild forest?

CK Some of them are cultivated, like elderberry. But most of the berries I have listed are not cultivated. You can't do it, it's not worth it

because it's a lot of work and economically it doesn't make sense.

TJ How do you get a commercial quantity of these wild fruits then?

CK We don't get commercial quantities. That's why with some of the spirits, we only have five bottles after one year. And that's exactly the point. Right now we're harvesting these cornelian cherries and an employee of mine rides his motorcycle all over the forest, looking for these trees, and he knows places where they grow. I made a map of where the trees are, and I've sent him off for harvesting. If we're lucky, we'll have one hundred kilos by the end of the week. From the one hundred kilos, I can produce maybe three litres of schnapps.

TJ To return to what we were talking about at the start—you move away from the city to the country, because you are assured that you have the possibility of maintaining cultural production. But it is a physically laborious form of cultural production where you do things that relate to the city, but on the terms of the country. You are in the country making eau-de-vie, but your market is Berlin and Hamburg.

CK It comes back to this utopian idea that we can run this farm as two people, producing something from a little farm and making a living from it. This only works if you reach a certain price level. If you sell at a discounter supermarket, you can't do it because it's about quantity for them. Here it's the contrary of quantity. It's about becoming smaller, getting less, but more expensive. Of course, talking about this idea, it's clear that only a certain kind of people can afford to think this way. To think, "I'd rather drink less, but to drink better." That's why the people who buy our products do live somewhere else. Ours is for the really gourmet connoisseurs who are looking for certain specialities. Or restaurants, high-class cuisine, stuff like that.

It's just that we can't do it any different. We calculate that we earn 5€ per hour. That's what's calculated into the prices of all the bottles, but only if all the bottles are sold. They cost to buy exactly what they cost to make. The price range for our spirits is from 30€ to 180€ per bottle, and

the cost is exactly the value of it, because that's the time you need to harvest, the time you need to find the fruit or to buy the fruit, that's the value of the fruit, that's the value of the amount of energy needed, the amount of water needed, the tax paid, and so on, so you can really say the price is a mirror of what is put into this. Some of the bottles have twenty kilograms of fruit in the one bottle.

TJ Would you prefer that it was different?

CK Well I would prefer that it would work perfectly as I was just describing; we're not there yet. That's the plan. The way it is, I can control it. If I have people that I know can never buy this kind of thing, I can give it to them, or I can have them taste it—that's why we do an open distillery once a month, so they can actually taste things. Of course, we're all dreaming of a more democratic and equal world. But I have to be very straight and say that we are producing a luxury product. I don't define a luxury product by who buys it, or who is the consumer. I would define it by what is put into the production of this product.

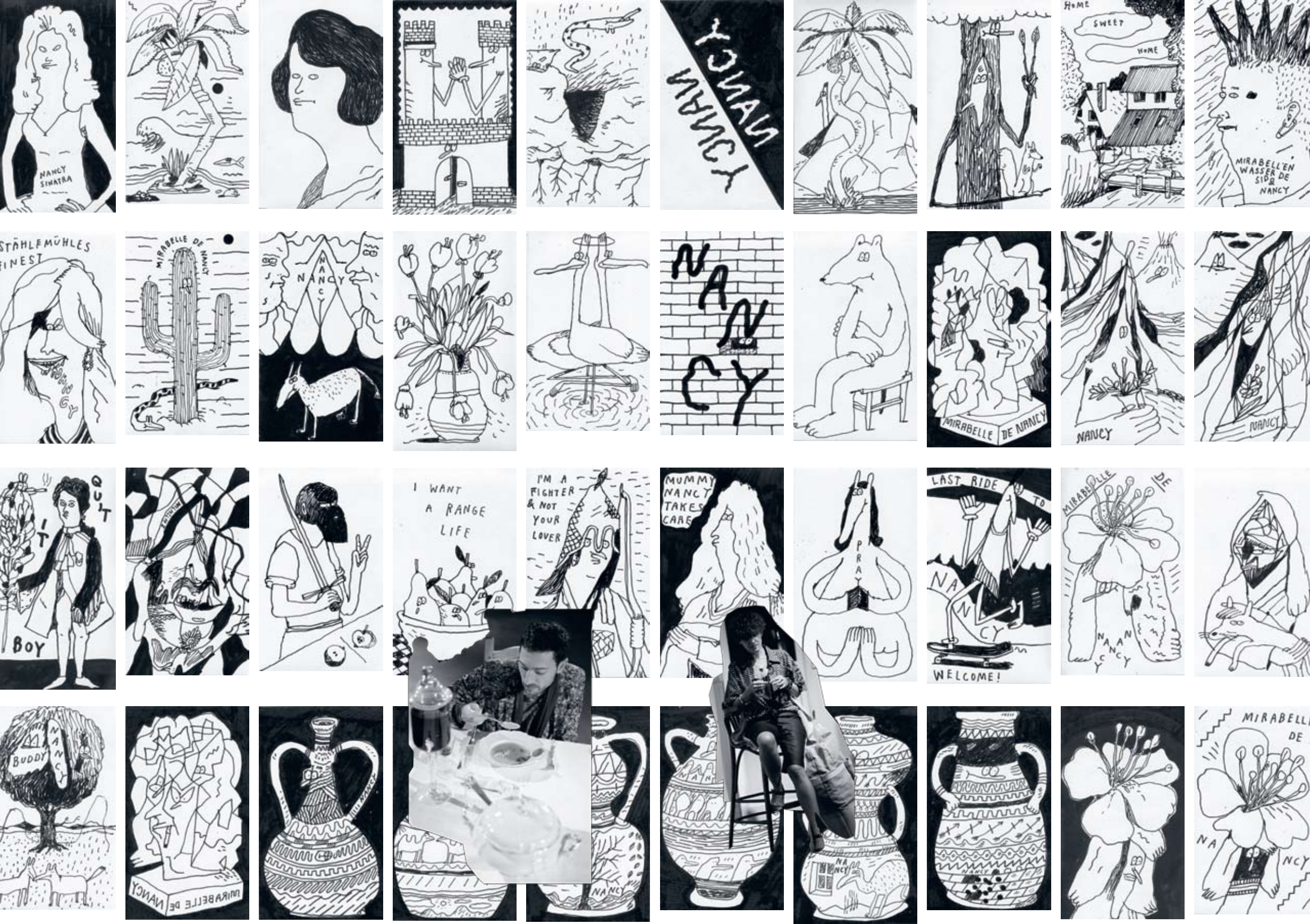
TJ But in this luxury production, you are not so far removed from your audience, your customers. It's on a scale where you can know them.

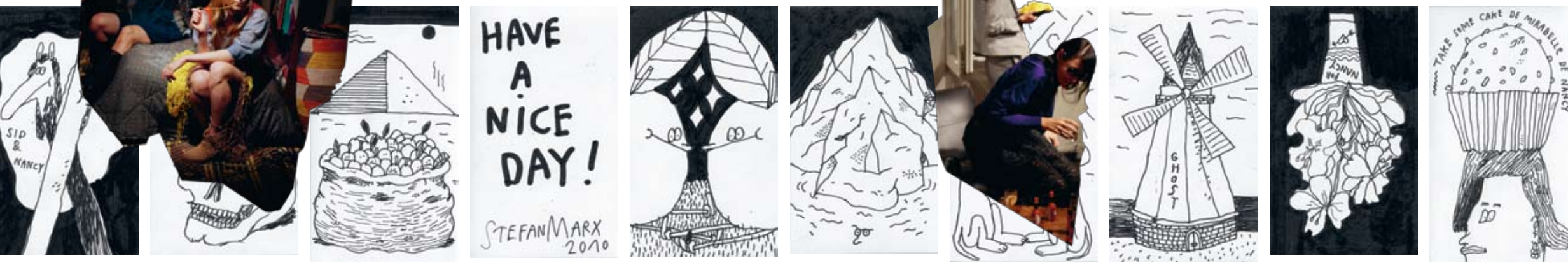
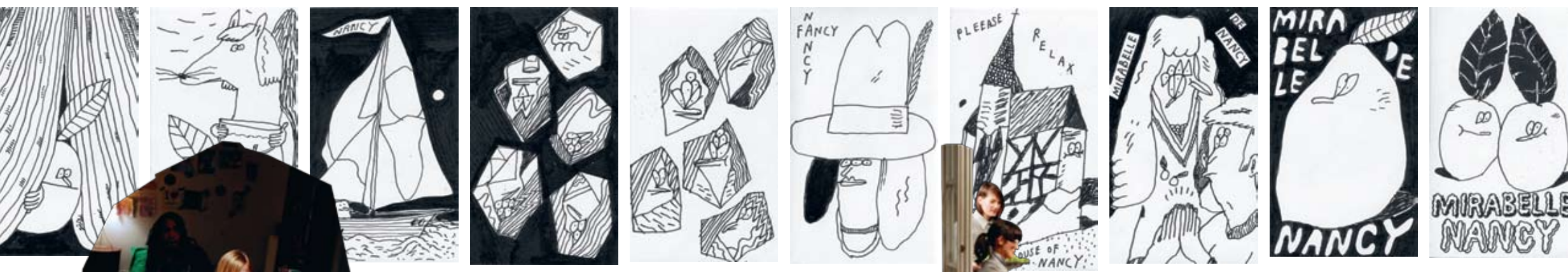
CK When I started publishing books, for two or three years, I could always say that I know everybody, personally, who bought a book from us. I could really say that for a long time, until it really grew. With schnapps, we're producing twelve hundred to fifteen hundred bottles a year and we also know the people who have them. It's back to the same business.

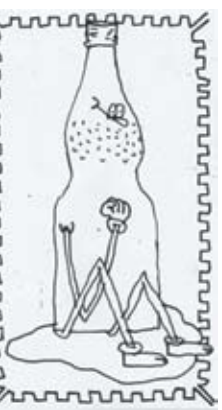
Further information about *Stäblemühle* can be found at www.staeblemuehle.de.

Alongside distilling, Christoph continues to produce art books, working with the Swiss publishing house *JRP Ringier* under the imprint *Christoph Keller Editions*.







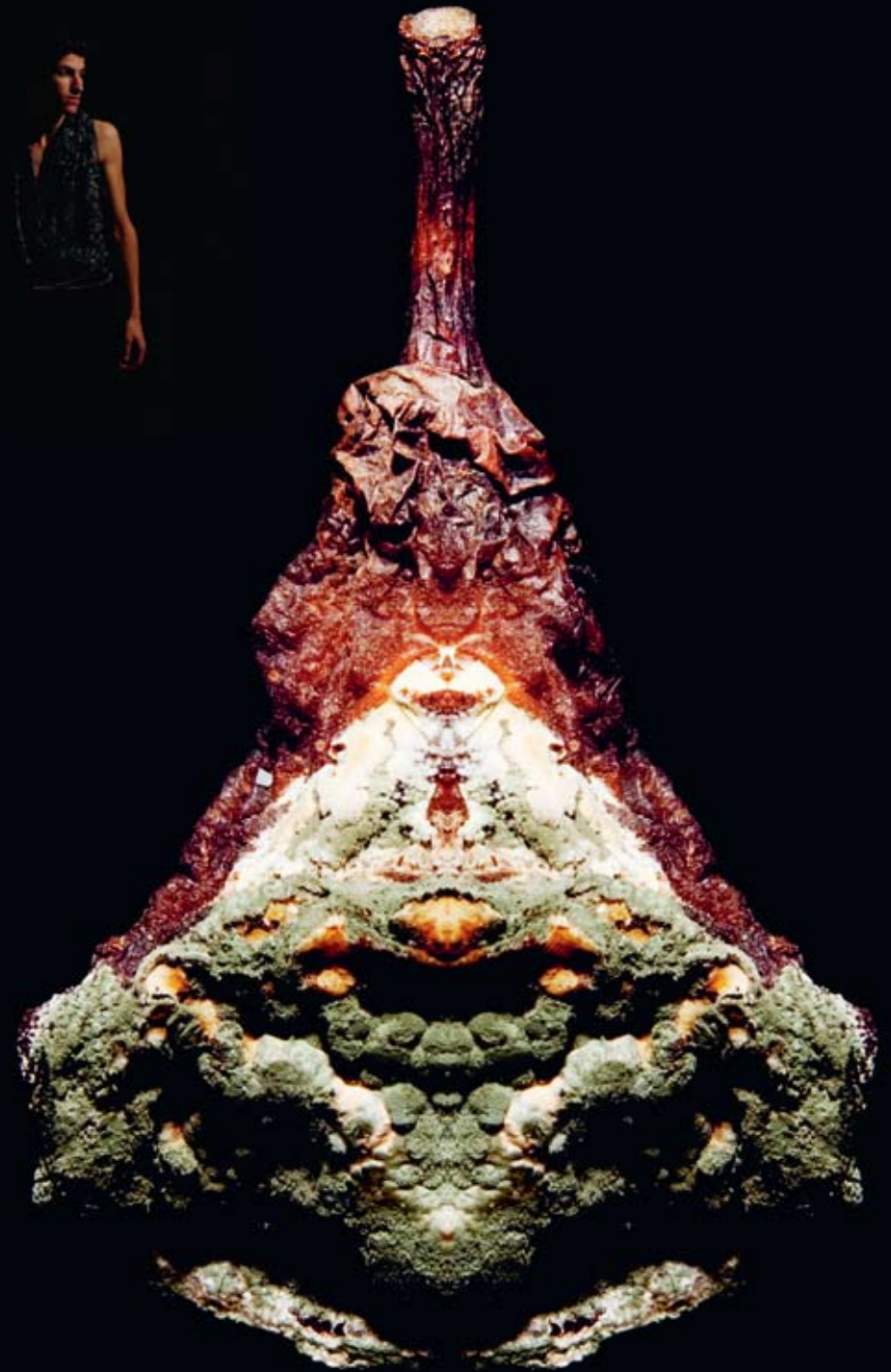


One hundred labels created for *Stählemühle* by STEFAN MARX

SUBMARINE FOOD VOYAGE

THE LAST SUPPER

photography by
KLARA KÄLLSTRÖM & THOBIA FÄLDT





At school I remember a girl sitting on the grass
She was eating a tongue
I lost the butterfly from my earring
She said she saw it flying away
Then she told me I might need glasses
She offered me a bite of her tongue
But she didn't know what kind of tongue it was
Probably a children-tongue, she said
Want some?
No, I said and held up a dried banana from my lunch box
Is it poo? she asked
Yes, I said and she snatched it out of my hand and ate it
I love poo, she said
And tongue
There, she said, your butterfly just flew past again, did you see it?
I didn't see it
You really need glasses, she said.

by Amanda Maxwell



The Solar Garden

COSMIC WONDER Light Source

100% Organic Cotton
All natural dyes

FRESH LICKS OF PAINT PAINTINGS BY GEOFF NEWTON

words by NANCY BALE

JUSTIN PATON, THE PHYSICS ROOM, CHRISTCHURCH, SATURDAY 14 AUGUST 2010, 1PM.

Justin began by outlining key ideas and thoughts. His commentary was followed by an active discussion from the audience.

He drew the audience's attention to the dated style of the food on the covers of the magazines and noted that there is a collective cringe about the fashions and aspirations of our recent past. While the historical past is often studied, revered or seen as nostalgic by the contemporary world, the recent past embarrasses and upsets the present. The period of this style of cookbook was also a time when anything French was en vogue, hence the title. He suggested that the artist was using this to comment on fads, freshness and being "out" or "in" in the art world. He remarked that Geoff, who is both art dealer and artist, must be acutely aware of the fickle nature of the art world and while being on the cover of a magazine at the time brings status it is by no means a guarantee of longevity.

Parallels were drawn between art and cooking. Justin noted that the connotations of these parallels could be cause for unease and discomfort in the art world (art as recipe). He discussed how cookbooks show an often unattainable reality. He remembered looking through the pictures of dessert books as a child and the disappointment at not having all the ingredients or the steps to follow being too intricate. He expanded on the idea of art magazines, home improvement magazines as well as cookbooks depicting impossible images of what life could be like. Owning and displaying these publications is a gesture that trumps actually following the instructions within, revealing what their middle class owners aspire to if time, money and resources were unlimited (e.g. my home would be styled as such if only I had the time...). Cookbooks themselves are objects of desire as are art magazines, particularly in New Zealand where the rest of the art world is glimpsed through these publications. Justin remembered throwing out old copies when moving house and how he had treasured the magazines when he first purchased them (with a collect-them-all attitude).

Justin highlighted the *Artlink* painting's fresh lettuce leaves and dressing and he discussed how there is a subtle eroticism to these paintings. He described the dressing being "drizzled" on the salad and noted how the title suggests undressing: a thought that the invitation confirms with the photo of Nigella in her velvet ball

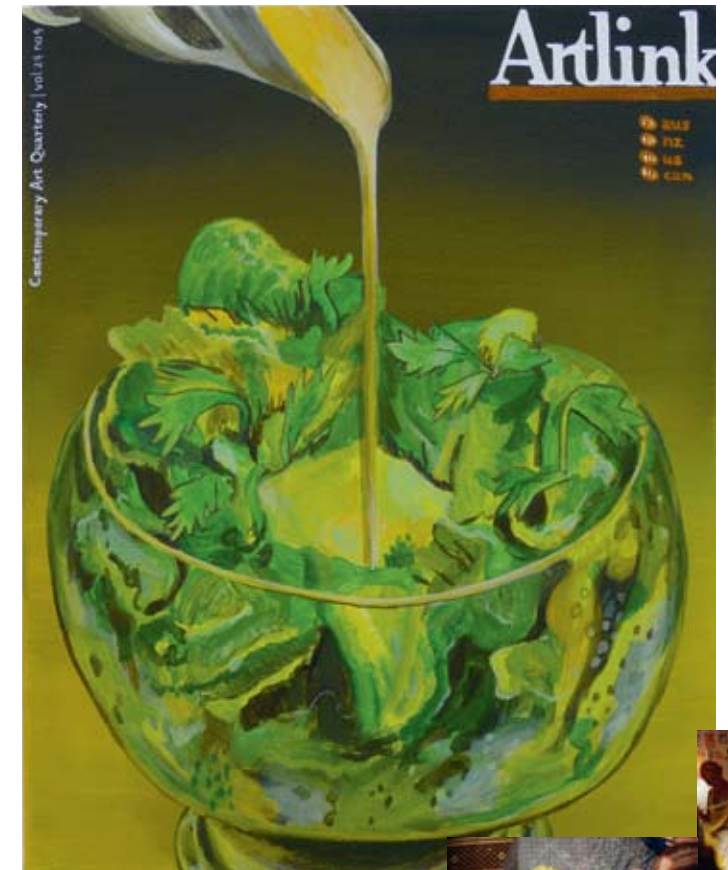


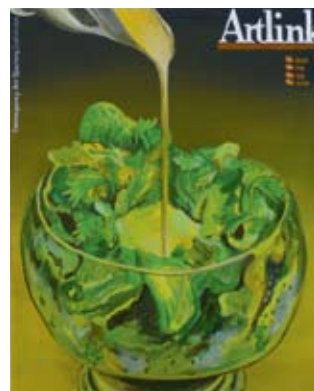
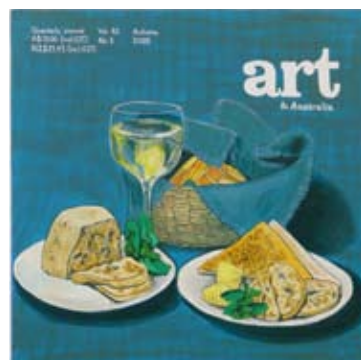
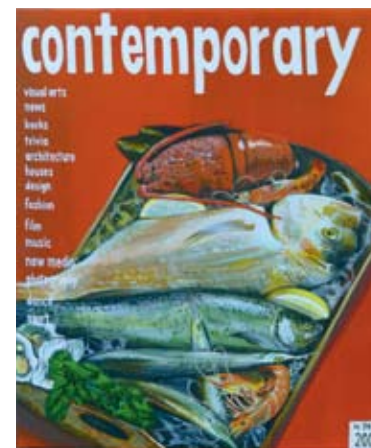
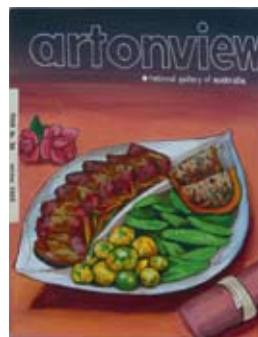
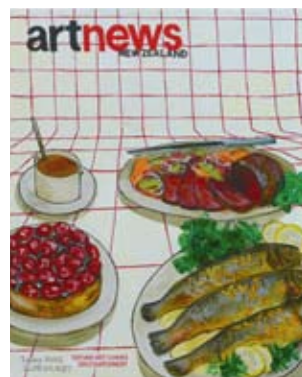
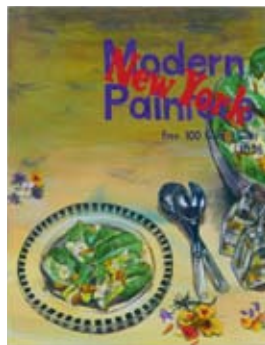
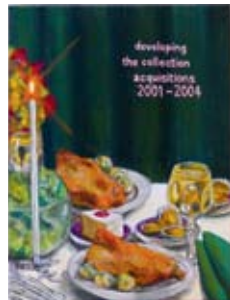
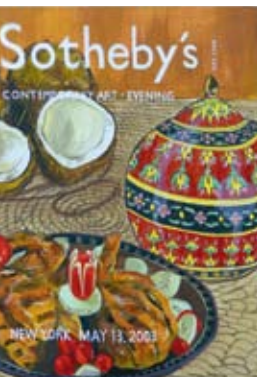
gown, breast tumbling out, reclining and smirking in the back of a limousine, a twinkle in her eye as well as on her bracelet.

He moved on to discuss modern pop culture's attitude to cooking, where everyone is an amateur chef. He mentioned friends obsessed with cooking shows (successors to cookbooks) and the TV stars that go with them. He likened this to blockbuster art shows and celebrity artists.

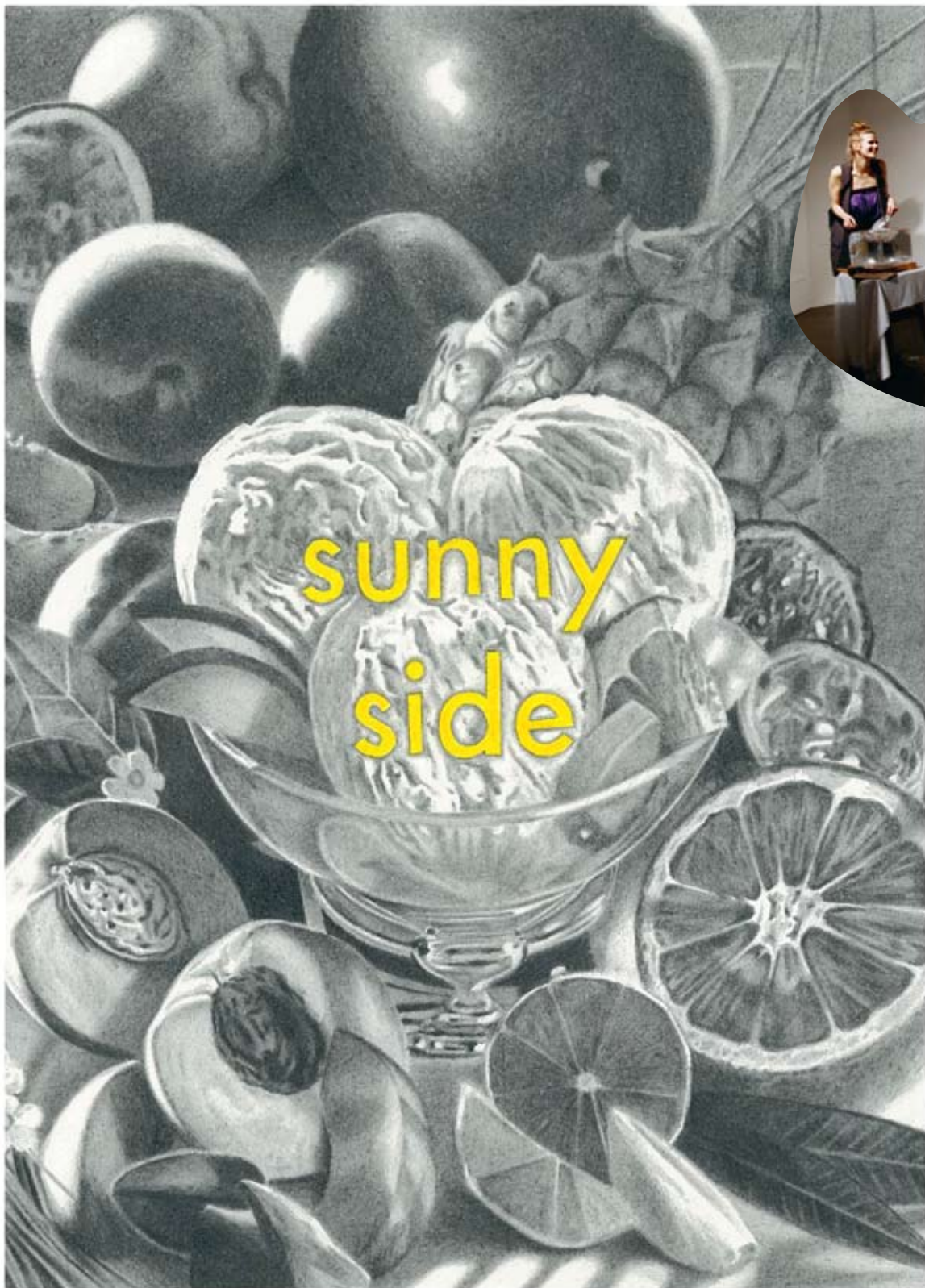
To sum up, Justin turned to the idea of taste and distaste in both art and cuisine. A member of the audience noticed this dichotomy in the contemporary painting compared to the *Artlink* painting.

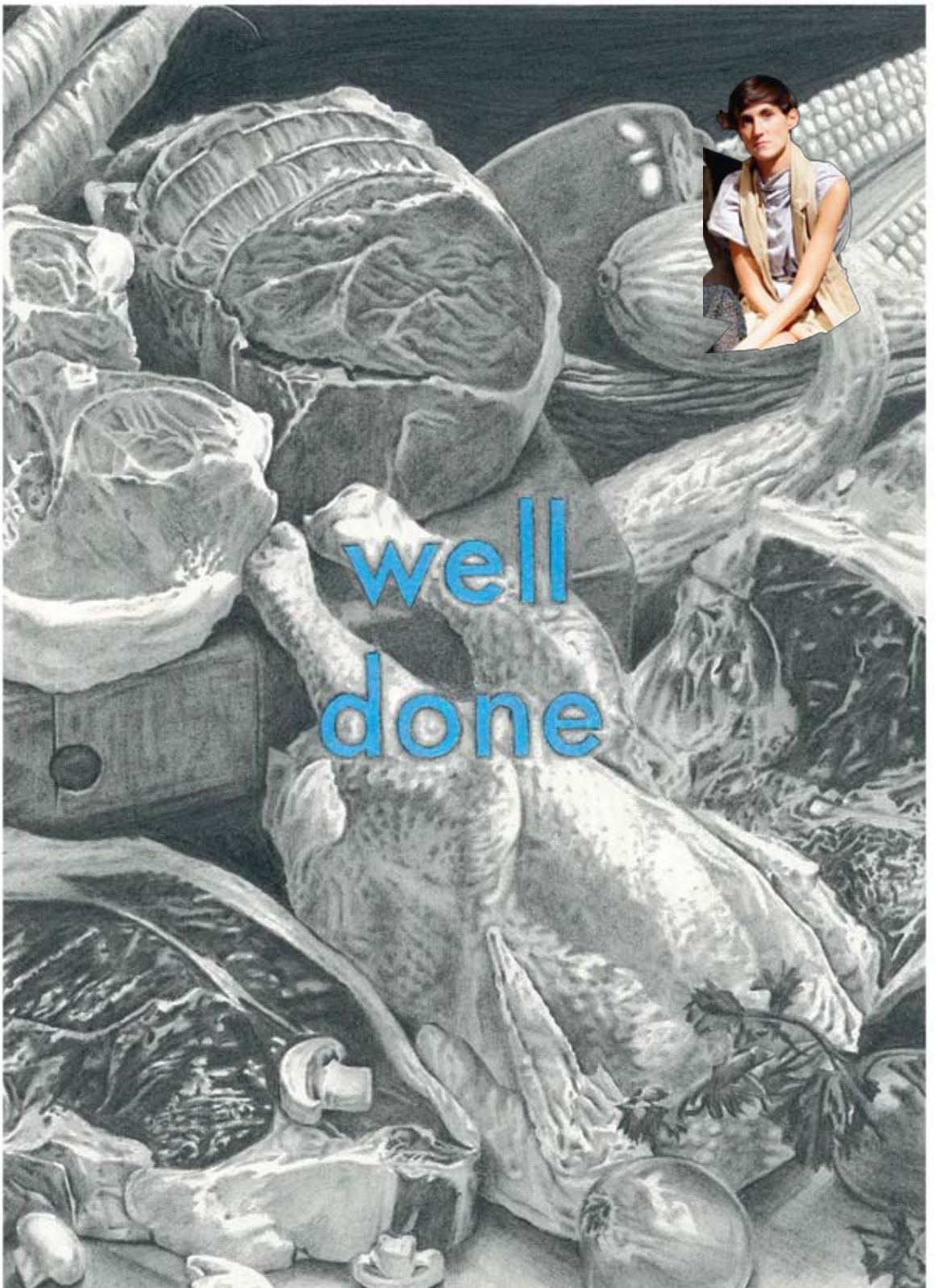
It is also of great importance for you to have a full mental image of Justin's shoes. This pair of eye-catching sneakers of sophisticated design suited Justin's suave fashion sense. No other shoe could measure up to his navy blue pseudo-felt sneakers with elegantly executed stripes in glossy flashy yellow and red-toned neon orange. They were the rebirth of cool.





Paintings originally featured in *FRENCH DRESSING*, an exhibition by Geoff Newton. 14 July-15 August 2010, The Physics Room. Work photographed by Tim J. Veling.





well
done