

Connecting Food and Art:

Cross-Industry applications and prospects

Food has been a favoured subject of art but rarely its bedfellow. Having been excluded from the canon of accepted expressions of art by the great aesthetic philosophers of the past¹, gastronomy has developed autonomously - with its own conventions, values, institutions and pedagogies. As the food we eat is increasingly a product of cultural preference and technology, with a growing distance from nature's design, new analytical paradigms are needed which reconsider our relationship with food and the chemical senses (taste, olfaction and chemesthesis). By revisiting the contentious relationship between food and art, new opportunities for industry practice and directions for analytical thought become apparent – made possible by fostering exchange between these two cultural expressions.

This paper examines the issues that have historically excluded the 'sense of taste' from art and explains the research involved in composing new theory for the chemical senses. Bridging the traditional divide between science and art², this multidisciplinary research is building constructive new industry collaborations that span the globe. The PhD research, sponsored by Givaudan flavour and fragrance manufacturers, incorporates contemporary knowledge in sensory research from Monell Chemical Senses Center, cognitive and semantic research from the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, contemporary gastronomy with the Nordic Food Lab and the Basque Culinary Center (including case studies with the world's best restaurants), and contemporary art practice with Khoj International Artists Association and established international artists. An upcoming collaboration is scheduled for MIT's Art, Culture and Technology programme, with an art residency project that focuses on 'endangered flavours' extracted from the Papua rainforest.

The benefits of this research for gastronomy are new partnerships, methodologies and venues for the creative development and showcasing of culinary concepts and technologies – constructing an industry-advancing 'space' that is not limited by the typical constraints of restaurants. Additionally, this research introduces a much-needed framework in support of the critical study of gastronomy – a discipline largely absent within the academic field of Food Studies. In contemporary art, the inclusion of the chemical senses offers a new medium for artistic dialogue and new tools for the creative expression of artists.

Ryan Bromley – Bio Note



Ryan Bromley is a researcher of contemporary gastronomy and a PhD candidate at Oxford Brookes University: *Can Art be Tasted? Critical theory for the chemical senses in contemporary art*. Ryan holds an MSc Food Policy degree from City University's Centre for Food Policy and was an intern with the World Food Program's Pandemic Response Unit. Previously, Ryan was Executive Chef for the UK's ambassador to Poland and worked for five years with

Zafferano Events, London's award-winning catering company. Currently living in New Delhi, Ryan builds collaborative partnerships to create innovative gastronomy and art projects that advance industry discourse on critical issues.

¹See, Korsemeier, Carolyn. *Making Sense of Taste*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1999

² Snow, C P. *The Two Cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 (original work published in 1959)