

O T H E R V I S U A L : O N T O T H E A U D I O V I S U A L C O O K I N G

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Abstract

This paper inquires about the kitchen as space of vibrant materiality for representation and agency for art, design and architecture practices. On meeting the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, it is not incidental that the 5th Istanbul Design Biennial curated by Mariana Pestana under the theme "Empathy Revisited: designs for more than one" has chosen the kitchen as a means to create spaces of discourses, exchange and collective reflection. Taking into account Jeffrey and Shaowen Bardzell's view of "What Is 'Critical' about Critical Design?" (2013), this paper surveys the biennial's programme "The Critical Cooking Show" which presents a digital programme of films, lectures and performances that reimagine the kitchen as a space central to design thinking and production.

Deepening our sensibilities as to how criticality occupies design practices, we have to further understand the expanded space of the kitchen and what it really offers to expand the space of design.

From the triangulation kitchen, design and process, evidence is searched for bridging process between the fields of kitchen and design following Buchanan's theory of rethinking placements over categories by way of signs, things, actions and thoughts. Kitchen and design are thus understood as liberal arts disciplines seeking to privilege a placement-based approach to projectual practice where observations on the speculative allow reflections of the self and modes of action. Pallasmaa's conception of an architecture of the senses, for whom the role of the body is understood as the locus of perception, thought and consciousness, helps explore and convoke the space of kitchen visited by artists and designers throughout recent history, as a means to establish relations between theories, processes, and projectual methodologies in kitchen and design. The reading of the space finds its translation through diverse processes applied by these creators leading to an understanding of a kitchen *milieu*: process as context. From the interpretation of the empirical work it is suggested that kitchen multiplies design ($k \times d$). It implies that the context of kitchen multiplies the space of the discipline of design, becoming, in Buchanan's term, a "quasi-subject matter of design thinking". If so, kitchen as other placements may offer, or are open to receive and edify, an expanded view of the discipline of design.

Keywords: criticality, kitchen, process, projectual practices, senses.

Introduction

Kitchen is an archetypal image of the everyday therefore its object pertains, touches upon, questions the space of all things familiar. Space however, Pallasmaa argues, must first be encountered and only then might it become space that is lived, experienced, inhabited. The origin of the term *archetype* arrives via Latin from Greek *arkhetupon* 'something moulded first as a model', from *arkhe-* 'primitive' + *tupos* 'a model'. The word is a noun meaning "an original which has been imitated; a prototype"; "a recurrent symbol or motif in literature, art, or mythology." In Jung's psychoanalysis theory archetype refers to "a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious."¹ It seems difficult to be alone in the kitchen since cooking not only brings people together in a space, or moments of the day, or a community, but cooking also connects the present, the here and now, to other times, other places, other traditions. And food, de facto, always comes from somewhere. Taste intimately bridges between here and elsewhere, between the human and more-than-human, at times dissolving if not removing the politics of that distance, while at others, revealing, exposing, and relishing in it. With little else to do and nowhere else to go during the 2020 quarantine many of us have found ourselves in the space of kitchen. Not always knowing what to do we turned to others in whatever way we could, for cooking – or the practice of preparing food, is not only an act of making and doing but also of learning how to make and do. Recipes are a media for ancestral communication, affected as they are by the disturbance of history. Moreover, when one cooks, one interprets, meaning we position ourselves, articulating relations of identity and difference, affection and disavowal (Axel, Hirsch, Pestana, Upham & Muraben, 2020). The private space of the kitchen provides refuge from the critical public gaze. This paper inquires about the kitchen as space of vibrant materiality for representation and agency for art, design and architecture

practices. Both kitchen and design are here understood as liberal arts hence disciplines seeking to rethink placements over categories by way of *signs, things, actions* and *thoughts*. By liberal art we mean a discipline of thinking that may be shared to some degree by all men and women in their daily lives, and is, in turn, mastered by a few people who practice the discipline with distinctive insight and sometimes advance it to new areas of innovative application (Buchanan 1992, p. 8-9). Cooking shows are a popular television format featuring food preparation, often involving celebrity chefs and personalities, usually highly produced. During the several recent lockdowns, people turned to social media as a space to share recipes and ideas more informally, from the intimacy of their own kitchens. Inspired by the richness of this evolving genre, the "Critical Cooking Show" programme offered a diverse range of styles and tones, from food demonstrations to fictional stories or home-made documentaries. Taking into account Jeffrey and Shaowen Bardzell's positioning of "What Is 'Critical' about Critical Design?" (2013) we have chosen the video piece "Hands Correspondence" to ask how does critical design subverts the system, engages the viewer/reader's imagination and brings about social change. Moreover, we argue that process and kitchen mean here more a gesture rather than a recipe. It implies that the context of kitchen multiplies the form and space of design, becoming, in Buchanan's term, a "quasi-subject matter of design thinking". If so, kitchen as other placements may offer, or are open to receive and edify, an expanded view of the discipline of design.

Cooking criticality

Before the image arrives, you hear a voice saying "sometimes, the hand seems to behave on its own". Visual and language arts have continuously overlapped the philosophical question of which comes first, the image or the word. That which our senses initially perceive from the film is the sound of the words. Indeed I went backwards to listen to these again since

¹ "archetype". In Lexico. Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press. Retrieved from, <<https://www.lexico.com/definition/archetype>>.

I was firstly caught up by the sound of the voice as my brain did not immediately process the meaning of the words. The first image only arrives at second 0:41 at the end of the telling “it expresses things we can’t quite formulate with words like an entity that produces meaning, space, forms” (Iwama, Lacoudre & Sineau, 2020).²

Prior to excavating “Hands Correspondence” a series of grid-lines are placed over the site to serve as points of reference. This relationship between the medium and the space of the kitchen, in particular with its sounds and gestures, convokes the piece “Semiotics of the Kitchen” (Martha Rosler, 1975) in which the author’s original inquiring seems to remain valid in the face of the current pandemic circumstances. This work has become the broth for a later version of the original in “Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition” (Martha Rosler, 2011). Especially since the 1960s artists have treated the cycles associated with food and eating as an expression of a broader cultural and societal realm. The *mise-en-scène* and the social practices governing food have been a recurring subject in Rosler’s artistic work. In “Semiotics of the Kitchen” this space becomes a theatre for deconstructing the traditional role of women. The original video depicts a performative alphabet of cooking implements adopting the form of a parodic cooking demonstration. The video itself is a performance-based piece where a static camera is focused on a woman in the circumscribed space of a kitchen. On a counter before her are a variety of utensils, each of which she picks up, names and proceeds to demonstrate, but with gestures that depart from the normal uses of the tool. Albeit the gestures depart from the traditional uses associated with each utensil, what it creates is a subversive grammar of sound (voice and noises)

and choreographed movements whereby “the woman and her implements enter and transgress the familiar system of everyday kitchen meanings — the securely understood signs of domestic industry and food production erupt into anger and violence” (Rosler, 1975).³ Through assigning (coding) a letter to the various tools found in the kitchen the voice-alphabet enhances the perception of succession and mechanical operations commonly happening at the space of the kitchen while bringing attention to the semiotics of household, entertaining, and educational media.

“Hands Correspondence” shares with “Semiotics of the Kitchen” an interest (when is concern? when is control? when is care?) for the representation of the space of kitchen with particular attention to the gestures — the hand and by extension the body. But whereas the first is more interested in inquiring the ontology, epistemology and depiction of these over the authority of the cultural and historical semiotics of the kitchen, by challenging the role of audiences about issues of power, gender and market consumerism as the second seems to care about. Attention to gender signifiers however is not absent in “Hands Correspondence” as the film depicts two women and a man sharing the preparation of a meal intended to be eaten together and in person. The confrontational audiovisual tone in “Semiotics of the Kitchen” contrasts with “Hands Correspondence” almost religious aesthetics of the everyday, in the sense of grasping the spiritual dimension of the space in observation. This artistic language approach conveys Edouard Glissant understanding of ritual, imagination and magical thinking when he says “I believe in the spirituality of the sacred. Not of religion, but of the sacred. What is the spirituality of the sacred? It’s the intuition of how

2 “Hands Correspondence” is video piece by Asako Iwama, Iris Lacoudre and Camille Sineau premiered Feb 7, 2021 as part of the “Critical Cooking Show”, a digital programme of films, lectures and performances that reimagine the kitchen as a space central to design thinking and production. The “Critical Cooking Show” is a collaboration between e-flux Architecture and the Istanbul Design Biennial within the context of its fifth edition, *Empathy Revisited: Designs for more than one*, curated by Mariana Pestana with Sumitra Upham and Billie Muraben. For watching “Hands Correspondence” visit the link: <<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/critical-cooking-show/358103/hands-correspondence>>.

3 Rosler 2011, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI). Retrieved from, <<http://www.eai.org>>.

we relate to the world. This is what the imaginary is: we feel the rumbling underneath us." We may say this is made visible through the integration of ancient depictions of the hand and arms such as the use anatomy drawings, these all working together with the storytelling voice of the narrator. Mention to the conception of memory as unconscious ingredient comes through revisiting by incorporating imagery collages of drawings, sculptures and movies such as the very "Semiotics of the Kitchen", "Le Festin de Babette" (Gabriel Axel, 1987), "FOOD" (Robert Frank, Suzanne Harris, Gordon Matta-Clark, Danny Seymour & Roger Welch, 1972), "In the Mood for Love" (Wong Kar-Wai, 2000) or the book "Speak Italian, the fine art of Italian hand gestures" (Bruno Munari, 1958), among other judgments of taste evocations.

00:27 "sometimes, the hand seems to behave on its own / it expresses things we can't quite formulate with words / like an entity that produces meaning, space, forms / while we talk and think, the hand moves / it looks as if we're independent of our consciousness / the hand has its way of communicating / with movements as words synchronized with our thoughts / it is hard to know which comes first / the thought or the gesture / in some ways, the hand seems to be another self / many expressions are intrinsically linked to hand gestures / such as one-one grasps reality, pulls the strings, gets a grip / these are all sorts of vividly haptic expressions /"

(gestures and thoughts freed from word's envelope)

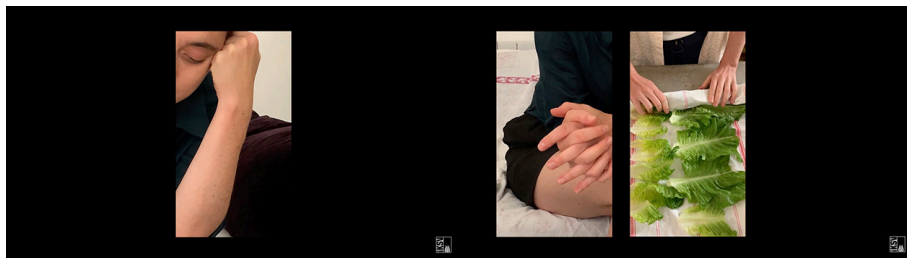


Fig. 1 Asako Iwama, Iris Lacoudre, and Camille Sineau, *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Screenshots from the 5th Istanbul Design Biennial YouTube channel retrieved from, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfrwRjYZnUU&t=13s>>.

We hope that at this point the reader has been tempted to the watch "Hands Correspondence". Not intended as an instruction we now make a deliberate choice not to extract more citations from the film's storytelling as is it believed this invites for the complete reading beyond the listening in the sense of understanding the movement that gives "a definiteness and interest to its successive portions greater than exists in the homogeneous portions of a disembodied passage" (Dewey, 2005, p. 37-43).

01:38 "during one of our conversations a few months ago / we talked about kitchen tools / we looked at them as support structures / that generate social, environmental and spatial situations / due to the gestures they produce and the relations they create / when discussing, we decided to focus on the most primitive form of toll / the hand, and by extension, the body / our conversations unfolded in our separate kitchens / in front of screens in three different cities / we have been thinking of preparing a shared meal / around a large *sofra* as a way to celebrate the hand as

a tool / but rather studently we were cut off from one another / prohibited from moving, touching or sharing / what should have been a public gathering and performance / moved to the intimate sphere of our respective apartments / instead of sharing a large meal as originally planned / we could only share the making of a dinner / no one would be able to attend /"

(sharing not the result but the making-of)

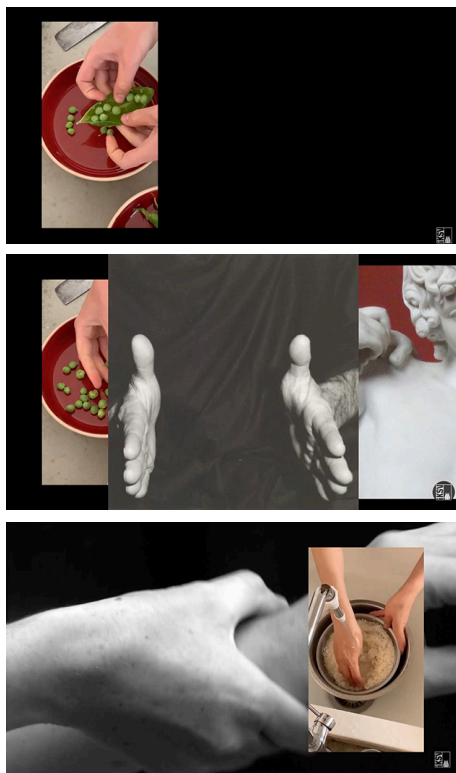


Fig. 2 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

03:27 "it is the very absence of that dinner / that helped reveal these everyday cooking gestures / it is something we share across borders / beyond the

confinements of our kitchens / we were able to observe and record / the different gestures involved in the preparation of different meals / together or individually / we are here retracing our correspondence / we are now preparing the impossible dinner and sharing our gestures along with our thoughts /"

(sharing our gestures as thoughts freed of being mediated by words)



Fig. 3 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

04:37 "but what exactly do these cooking gestures convey? / they express a form of knowledge and skill perpetuated through time by repetition and social gathering / they can also convey a form of intimacy and memory / for example, in the specific way that parent folds dumplings or kneads bread / each of those gestures is being repeated over and over / at different times in different places / each of us has her own way of doing it / we therefore decided to focus on these very gestures which are not normally given much attention / in disappearing from our

consciousness / cooking gestures almost become a habit / habit stems from the repetition of the same gestures or activities / every day at the same time / it builds on the memory of the same past gestures / like a residue / the way one unconsciously takes a pinch of salt and sprinkles it / the way one shakes their hands after having washed them / or the way one breaks a piece of bread to eat / it is simply happening and is not a conscious act / it happens to us while we make it happen / it is a middle point, a *milieu* /"

(gesture is a *milieu* to get into intimacy and memory grounded in residues)

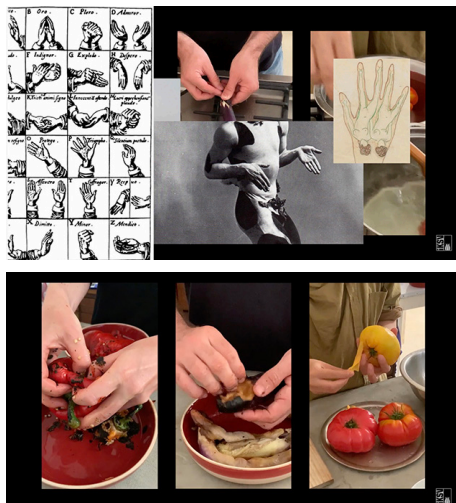


Fig. 4 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

Gestures are also recursive structures. By recursive structures we mean elements carrying the essential information that generates similar patterns visible on different fields. While Rosalind Krauss defines "a recursive structure, that is, some of the elements of which will produce the rules that generate the structure itself ... Further, that this recursive structure is something made, rather than something given, is what is latent in the traditional connection of "medium" to matters of technique." (Krauss, 2000, p.7). David Gelernter however gives a different perspective of the same concept. Identifying a recursive structure as a shorthand abstraction with surprising applications beyond science he explains that "a structure is recursive if the shape of the whole recurs in the shape of the parts." (Gelernter, 2011). In Wolfgang Tilmans work *Peas* (2003) for instance it is possible to observe that the recursive structures have dynamic structures that change, because they continuously accommodating the new conditions upon which are exposed. However, it is possible to unveil those structures: If you have a close look to the water movements you will find shapes that reply the shapes of water movements changing at different streams. The same occurrence can be observed in movement, mechanics, and fluids, in physics.

06:14 "the hand is also able to sense and apprehend the world around us / it knows how to distinguish between textures, density, weight and volume / it can recognize a right fruit by applying the right pressure / to feel if it's too soft or too mushy / or if it feels empty, heavy or watering /"

(tell of sensing through the hands)

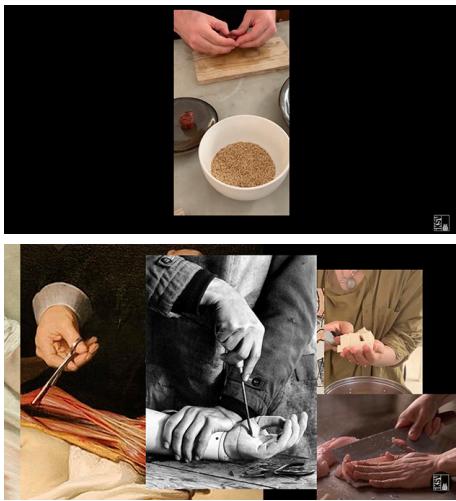


Fig. 5 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

07:04 "In a way, habit can be defined as a memory of a coincidence / in the sense of what is co-incident, what happens together / in fact, it holds the memory of a specific gesture produced in a specific set of conditions / in the meantime, this memory is also a way towards a future / towards what is going to happen again / sometimes, a new coincident is introduced / a micro change, something unexpected / that was not part of what appended before / and disturbs the all series of events and then becomes incremental generative of a new series a new memory / this is why habit holds the notion of change in itself /"

(habit holds the notion of change in itself. Time.)

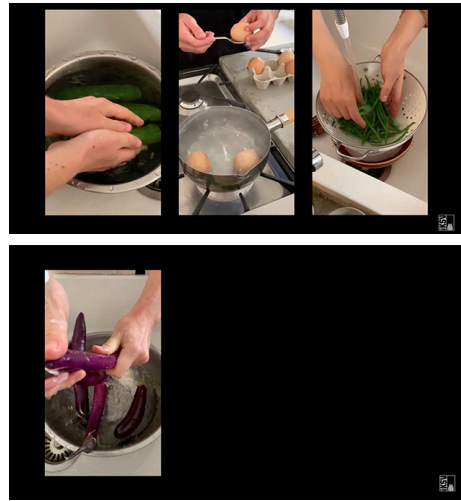


Fig. 6 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

08:04 "the simple act of breaking a soft-boiled egg requires dexterity / you start by picking up the egg with the right amount of pressure so as not to break it / you then tap it on a hard surface with just enough force to break the shell / and then repeat the operation until the entire shell is cracked / once the shell is broken you can feel the pressure change / and tell whether the egg is cooked correctly / lastly, you pinch and start tearing down the shell, to slowly peel it /"

(continuation of tell of sensing through the hands)



Fig. 7 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

09:43 "our body is a microbiome / in constantly exchange with the world that is invisible to the naked eye / a world of bacteria and fungi as is the case with most organic matter / some of those same bacteria will play an important role in producing specific tastes / we can think of all the fermented processes, such as cheese, vinegar, kimchi / a world of invisible labour due time / and of dynamic exchanges with the world around us /"

(hand as a sensible extension tool of our body, not necessarily mediated by words)



Fig. 8 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

10:42 "the kitchen is a space that is today very standardized and fits very specific dimensions within which the body has to perform / from the height of the kitchen elements / to the distance between objects / it is a space made of many constrains / it starts at the smaller scale of our hand gestures / to our body posture and the overall movement of our bodies in the kitchen / while cooking our body is in constant movement like a perpetual flow of energy / the body adopts different postures and different trajectories / in order to move smoothly and not stagnate / it is like reverse functionalism / the kitchen becomes the extension of our body and the awareness of all the different utensils, tools and units / generates the sense of space around us /"

(tell of reverse functionalism)

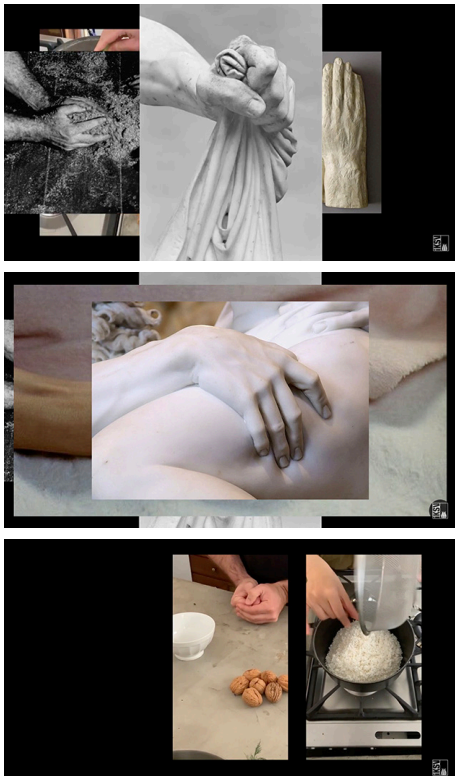


Fig. 9 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

12:57 “the current situation made us aware all of the simple gestures that usually slip out of our consciousness / that is a strong relationship between our hands and mouths / both are in a constantly exchange / mediating the relationship between the interior of bodies and the outside world / this dynamic also mediates the relationships between us and other species we ingest plants or animals / when I ingest something, I incorporate it / I go beyond myself by ingesting or being ingested by others / eating is inherently political / in fact, sharing such an essential act that constitute us as living beings / quite studently puts each one of us into a different type of relation / a less objectified one / one can think of the simple act of gathering around a table, a *sofra* or hot pan for instance. /”

(relationship between our hands and mouths, the intimacy of our bodies and the outside world, the social and politics)



Fig. 10 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

13:59 "some food gets the mark of the hand like an imprint an irregularity you can recognise. / Onigiri, a Japanese food made from white rice formed into triangular shapes and often wrapped in seaweed is an interesting example / their shapes are the direct result of the pressure of both hands / the onigiri has slightly rotated between each pressure / which creates an evenly shaped triangle / this physical trace is important / as it is an immediate relation between the food and the hand between the meal and the person / a direct exchange giving it a very special value / also, one treats ingredients differently when doing it by hand / it creates a different type of attention and awareness / some even say that things made by hand taste different that the touch of the hand brings something more / it could simply be folk believe / but in any event, these few touches on the notion of boundaries / what distinguish one's body from another? / where exactly does it start? or end? /"

(The elasticity and uniqueness of intimacy boundaries)

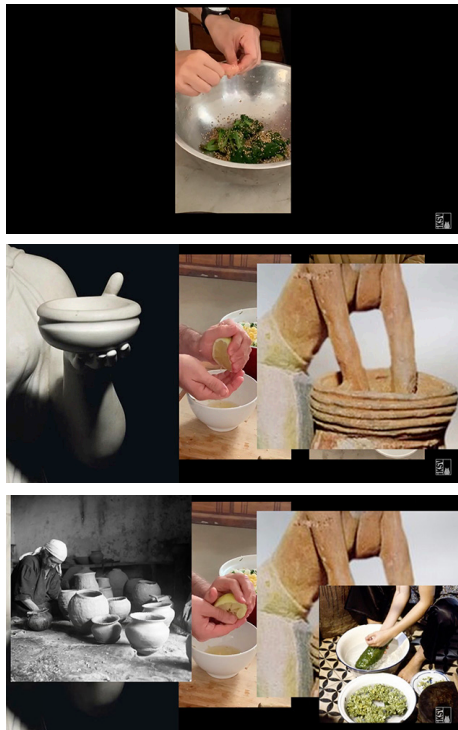


Fig. 11 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

15:37 "in fact we heard that in *Confucian* ideals soup is a model for harmony / both on an aesthetic and social level / as one prepares a soup by mixing a series of different ingredients to balance out the flavors / namely sweet, sour, bitter, spicy and salty / a successful attempt would see all ingredients remaining distinct and individually recognizable while also blending into a balanced and tasteful organic whole thus creating something harmonious and completely new /"

(creating something harmonious and completely new)

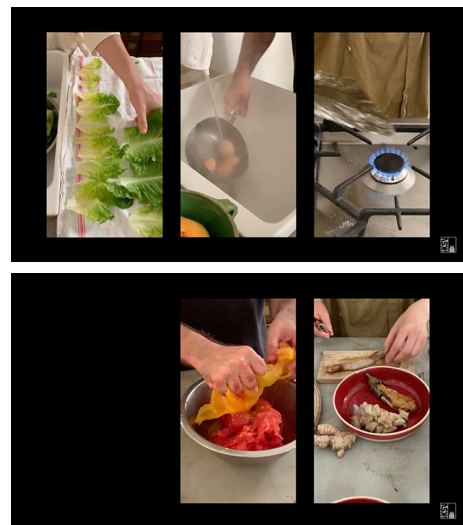


Fig. 12 *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

16:27 "isn't friendship a form of proximity and intimacy that resists representation and objectification? / as you somehow recognize yourself in that alterity / a friend is not just an other / in that sense it is a becoming other of the self. / There is a form of synchronicity / and when one is cooking for someone / one has to imagine the other's appetite and desires and synchronize with it, find a balance / it can of course remain completely mistuned / but this simple act of tuning to another's palate is a strong expression of hospitality and empathy /"

(for the creator, the user is a becoming other of the self. The designer is imagining and tuning to another's palate, an empathy shaped by care and hospitality)



Fig. 13 Asako Iwama, Iris Lacoudre, and Camille Sineau, *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Ibid.

From the triangulation kitchen, design and process this essay searches bridging process between the fields of kitchen and design following Richard Buchanan theory of rethinking *placements* over categories by way of *signs, things, actions* and *thoughts*. This triangulation finds its preferred geometry in Kant's logic entanglement of the three intuitions exposed in his work "The Critique of Pure Reason" (1781): the scientific intuition, the everyday intuition and the artistic intuition intertwining. Following this reasoning kitchen and design are here observed as spaces. According to Kant, the conception of space is pure intuition for "space is a necessary representation a priori, which serves for the foundation of all external intuitions. (...) space is nothing else than the form of all phenomena of the external sense." (Kant, 2003, p. 114-15).

In his work "The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses" (1996) Juhani Pallasmaa explains how during the Renaissance perspectival representation was describing but also conditioning perceptions. By making the eye the centre point of the perceptual world the eye acts as the centre point of the concept of the self. The representation of the five senses were understood to form a hierarchical system where vision had the highest importance and touch appeared undervalued. In this period "vision was correlated with fire and light, hearing to air, smell to vapour, taste to water, and touch to earth." (Steven, 1994 as cited in Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 16). David Michael Levin motivates the reflection upon the dominance of the eye and its everyday seeing onto a critical understanding of ourselves, as visionary beings. In his words "The will to power is very strong in vision. There is a very strong tendency in vision to grasp and fixate, to reify and totalize: a tendency to dominate, secure, and control, which eventually, because it was so extensively promoted, assumed a certain uncontested hegemony over our culture and its philosophical discourse, establishing, in keeping with the instrumental rationality of our culture and the technological character of our society, an ocularcentric metaphysics of presence." (Levin, 1993 as cited in Ibid, p. 17).

For Pallasmaa touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves. It's true that even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into the haptic continuum of the self; my body remembers who I am and where I am located in the world. My body is truly the navel of my world, not in the sense of the viewing point of the central perspective, but as the very locus reference, memory, imagination and integration" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.11). Even though the evolution of modernity has been characterized by the liberation of the eye from Cartesian perspectival epistemology, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Italo Calvino all have argued modernity negative tendencies towards the historical privileging of sight. In Pallasmaa view

"beyond architecture, contemporary culture at large drifts towards a distancing, a kind of chilling de-sensualisation and de-eroticisation of the human relation to reality." (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.34). The hegemony of the eye has also been felt on philosophy. The impact of the sense of vision in the discipline was summarized by Peter Sloterdijk in the following: "The eyes are the organic prototype of philosophy. Their enigma is that they not only can see but are also able to see themselves seeing. This gives them a prominence among the body's cognitive organs. A good part of philosophical thinking is actually only eye reflex, eye dialect, seeing-onself-see." (Sloterdijk, 1988 as cited in Pallasmaa, 2005, p.15). However, the human has not always been dominated by the visual. Studies in anthropology describe cultures in which our private senses of smell, taste and touch continue having collective significance in behaviour and communication (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.24).⁴ Lucien Febvre explains that "The sixteenth century did not see first: it heard and smelled, it sniffed the air and caught sounds." (Jay, 1988 as cited in Pallasmaa, 2005, p.25). A parallel argument is made by Robert Mandrou: "The hierarchy [of the senses] was not the same [as in the twentieth century] because the eye, which rules today, found itself in third place, behind hearing and touch, and far after then. The eye that organises, classifies and orders was not the favoured organ of a time that preferred hearing." (Ibid, p. 34-35 as cited in Pallasmaa, 2005, p.25). In relation to touch and according to Ashley Montagu: "touch is the parent of our eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. It is the sense which became differentiated into the others, a fact that seems to be recognized in the age of old-evaluation as touch as 'the mother of the senses.'" (Montagu, 1986 as cited in Ibid, p. 11).

The present technological culture has "ordered and separated the senses even more distinctly". Vision and hearing are, today, "the privileged sociable senses", while smell, taste and touch "are considered as archaic sensory remnants with a

merely private function, and they are usually suppressed by the code of culture... only sensations such as the olfactory enjoyment of a meal and responses to temperature are allowed to draw collective awareness in our ocularcentric and obsessively hygienic code of culture" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 16.). Accordingly, the true enlightenment in the spirit of Kant's critique of judgment seems only to be assigning to taste the very faculty of touch inasmuch the sense of taste, in Kant, is metonym for sensibility. It may thus be argued the deconstruction of taste in Kant is, to a certain extent, an instrumental displacement of language/(sight?) in representation, a change in perception from the stimulus/sensory modality or quality of vision to that of taste but only to turn touch or sensibility the center receptor of the concept of the self. To put this assumption in the context of Sloterdijk, taste rather than sight would represent, typify, and disclose for Kant the organic prototype of space of representation. Following this reasoning kitchen may invite for a regression, lessening, decrease of the visual to other sensory modalities.

Is touch pure intuition? According to Kant intuition "is that representation which can be given previously to all thought." (Kant, 2003, p. 163). In his work "Being and Time" (1927), Heidegger writes: "being reveals itself as care" (Heidegger, 1962 as cited in Campolo, 1984, p. 441). About desire Kant wrote in a note: "my definition of the faculty of desire has been found fault with, viz. that it is [the being's] faculty of becoming by means of its representations the cause of the actuality of the objects of these representations." (Kant, 2015, footnote 9). In the words of Yannis Stavrakakis, desire, "[it] becomes a simulacrum of what in the order of the signifier resist signification, that is to say of the real." (Stavrakakis, 1999 as cited in Pereira, 2002, p. 120-21).

Both kitchen and design are here understood as liberal arts. Buchanan understanding of liberal art might perhaps find

4 The role of the senses in the use of collective and personal space in different cultures is the subject of Edward T. Hall's work *The Hidden Dimension* (1969).

echoes in that which Jacques Derrida calls us to think about *the familiar* in respect to architecture. In his lecture "Invitation to a discussion", delivered in 1992 at the Avery Hall in Columbia University, Mark Wigley introduces the philosopher: "Derrida has taught us how to question the familiar—indeed, following Heidegger, to be suspicious particularly of the familiarity of the ingrained (established, firmly fixed, difficult to change) intellectual practices that organize both so-called high-cultural institutions, and the so-called practices of everyday life." (Wigley, 1992, p.8). When in 1985 Derrida and philosophy were invited by Bernard Tschumi to the space of architecture, a space which, as Wigley puts it, "is not yet to say an architectural space", Derrida wrote an essay which "inhabits the architect's material, teasing, tasting, testing, delimiting, speculating but not judging... the text, in a kind of strategic transference, assumes the form of that which it describes." (Wigley, 1992, p.8)

In the West German pavilion at Expo 58 in Brussels, the home and its order of domestic politics was given special significance above all other social sites. David Crowley describes public visitors were received "with evidence of inward-looking". In the book *Atomic Dwelling* (Schuldenfrei ed., 2012), Crowley's essay "From Homelessness to Homelessness" describes the family kitchen "was displayed in cross-section with all the facing walls framed with glass. The viewer was offered uninhibited views of the pipe-work under the sink and the contents of the cupboards. Things were to reveal themselves in the most direct and unmediated fashion. Such displays even aspired to what Susan Sontag was to call "transparency," the experience of "luminousness of the thing itself" (Sontag, 1983) (...) Privacy had – since 1945 – been given a central role in the denazification of a militarized, corporate society." (Crowley, 2012). In 1972, Ettore Sottsass, designer working at the end of the modernist project and founding member of the Memphis group exhibited for the MOMA's "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" the place of a "home" as a series of free-standing plastic shells, each of

which containing the equipment to serve a domestic function such as cooking and bathing. In the same essay Crowley wrote that Sottsass "presented a domestic space which sought to "decondition" its user. Lacking any kind or pre-determined form or setting, Sottsass's "domestic landscape" was a de-territorialized one (...) stirred by the Counter Culture's antagonism to the commodity and traditional social structures, [he] – sought to shake off the so called "affluent society's" attraction to property. Nomadism and communalism, might produce a new kind of being, based on a deeper engagement with the world and with society." (Crowley, 2012).

In his own words about the exhibition Sottsass has expressed that "The form isn't cute and even, maybe, rough, (...) and the expected deconditioning process, even if it works in a negative direction, I mean in the direction of eventually eliminating the self-indulgence of possession, will certainly impose a responsibility upon whoever ventures to use these objects. Eliminating the protective layer of alibis we build around ourselves always necessitates great commitment (...) Not only the containers can be groped or dissolved, but they can also take continuous configurations, or be snake-like, stiffened as Chinese walls, create transparent or closed, narrow or deep or broad, open or short areas, they can thus draw the most suitable scenario for the drama one intends to carry out or is actually carrying out." (Sottsass, 1972 as cited in Crowley, 2012).

To integrate the space of kitchen as the unity of the concept uniting the space of intuition we must recognize "the role of the body as the locus of perception, thought and consciousness, and of the significance of the senses in articulating, storing and processing sensory responses and thoughts." (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 10). Isabel Lugo refers to the etymology of the word "saber" intending to unveil the symbolic close relations between diet, knowledge, and intuition. In Spanish as well as in Portuguese the word *saber* (in Italian *sapere*, German *wissen*, English *knowledge*) arrives from the Latin verb

sapio, sapis, sapere, which signifies to physically perceive the flavour of something through the sense of taste. *Saber*, Lugo explains, it was initially *gustar, gostar (tasting)*, to recognize *el sabor (the flavour)*. According to the International Standards Organization Flavour is defined as a “complex combination of the olfactory, gustatory and trigeminal sensations perceived during tasting. The flavour may be influenced by tactile, thermal, painful and/or kinaesthetic effects” (Spence, Auvray & Smith 2014, p. 3).⁵ *Sapor, saporis* also proceeds from *sapio*. From that origin, *sapere* (knowledge) passes or moves to signify having intelligence, judgment, understand something. The one who tastes can (may?) discern with certainty, possesses a vital and necessary knowledge, survives, and thanks to it can reach other *saberes*. *Sabor, saber, saborear, saboroso, insípido, sabiduria, sábio*. Following this reasoning might one give to consideration the enabling of cognition via taste?

In Kant, the judgement of taste is aesthetical and the faculty of judgement is laid down in reference to pleasure and pain. Feelings of pleasure and pain would thus be the decision making subject in the process involving taste. Moreover, taste in Kant is directed to the method of representing an object. Whereas the etymological root (deviation) does not express conditions regarding *saber* (knowing) other than to physically perceive the flavour, Kant establishes that it is only when the will, urge or appetite for everything that is eatable, in other words, either survival or greed “is appeased that we can distinguish” in a judgment of taste (Kant 2015, p. 46, 55, 66). We can perhaps agree that to a certain extent taste in Kant borrows reason from etymology “for in a judgment of taste the reference to understanding is always involved” but it goes further in deconstructing the word beyond grammatical reasons in translation for taste in Kant is a matter of critique. For finding reason in the judgment of taste one should on the one hand, place the faculty of judgment into the faculty of the processes, and on the other hand, place the method of representing into the given space of the kitchen which is

contextual. In process and kitchen experience is implicated with fruition. Whereas experience relates here to Pallasmaa definition of a situational bodily encounter, fruition borrows from Kant understanding of *receptivity* or “the capacity for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects.” (Kant, 2003, p. 106).

In considering the role of unconscious perception and creative thought Pallasmaa argues against the common understanding that “creative search is based on vague, polyphonic and mostly unconscious ways of perception and thought instead of focused and unambiguous attention.” (Pallasmaa 2014, p. 236) In this respect he acknowledges Anton Ehrenzweig arguments “that in order to grasp the inarticulate, unconscious entity of artistic works, we must adopt the mental attitude of diffuse attention.” (Ehrenzweig, 1953 as cited in Pallasmaa, 2015, p. 236). Pallasmaa continues on demystifying: “unconscious and unfocused creative scanning grasps complex entities and processes, without conscious understanding of any of the elements (...) I wish to underline the fact that we have unexpected synthesizing capacities that we are not usually aware of, and, besides, which we do not regard as areas of special intelligence or value. The biased focus on rational logic and its significance in human mental life is a major reason behind this unfortunate rejection. (Pallasmaa, 2014, p. 237). This experiencing space Pallasmaa invites us into is of heightened importance if designers are indeed trained to conceptualize: “one must eat well” Jacques Derrida reminds. “One must eat’ (...) One never eats entirely on one’s own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement... It is a rule offering infinite hospitality. And in all differences, ruptures, wars... “eating well” is at stake. One must eat well—here is a maxim whose modalities and contents need only be varied, *ad infinitum*. This evokes the law of need or desire (...), *orexis*, hunger and thirst (“one must,” “one must [eat] well”), (...) speak to him in words that also pass through the mouth, the ear, and the sight, and respect the law that is at once a

5 ISO (1992, 2008, 2017): Standard 5492: Terms relating to sensory analysis. International Organization for Standardization.

voice and a court (it hears itself, it is *in us* who are *before it*). The sublime refinement involved in this respect for the other is also a way of “Eating Well”, in the sense of good eating but also doing well to eat” (Derrida, 1991, p. 115).

Restoring the value of the kitchen for the discipline of design means reading a space of pure difference and complex repetition for the kitchen allows testing roles of agency both as guests and hosts. Drawing on Michel Serres, we can relate the changing of roles to the oscillating figure of ‘l’hôte’: a figure that is literally both, guest and host, at the same time in a mode of permanent flux. ‘L’hôte’, host and guest in one word, gives and receives, offers and agrees, invites and is invited, is host and stranger.’ (Serres, 2007, p.15). Playing the role of ‘l’hôte’ means to always renegotiate the rules of empathy, of what is allowed and where compromises and alliances can be made. Drawing from the process of the ‘l’hôte’ dynamics, the projectual practice involved in the piece “Hands Correspondence” is both logical as philosophical. Such placement tends to find substantial translation in the proposition that kitchen times design (k x d). With this we aim meaning that the space of kitchen is a space of fruition for projectual experience if and only when kitchen is a space of alterity for design. In other words, when kitchen multiplies design, the critical declaration, condition or possibility of design uncovers the latent potential in becoming of the kitchen. Consequently, these rules are not arriving from the individual institution, of kitchen and of design disciplines, but from an already hybrid space of discipline. So if we want to understand what makes critical design “critical” we can find our answer in the combination of certain ingredients: “a design research project may be judged “critical” to the extents that it proposes a perspective-changing holistic account of a given phenomenon, and that this account is grounded in speculative theory, reflects a dialogical methodology, improves the public’s cultural competence, and is reflexively aware of itself as an actor—with both power and constraints—within the social world it is seeking to change.” (Bardzell & Bardzell, 2013, pp. 3304)

Final considerations

If we agree that medium-specific analytic skills are the stock and trade of criticism, we argue that the kitchen enters the space of design when design is prepared to be a kitchen. If in design there is artistic intention, historical reception/effects, semantic/syntactic complexity, agency and voice granted to the peripheries and marginal arts, delicacy of discrimination, new uses of materials/medium. In sum if/when design is willing to compromise with what James Elkins coins of “logic of sensation” in relation to modes and experimental processes. For “The *Logic of Sensation* can be read as a model of how not to write philosophy *at* images, or imply images *are* philosophy, or that they’re adequately imagined *as* philosophy, history, or criticism.” (Elkins, 2017, 66). When Deleuze affirms that sensation is immediate, that it is ‘translated directly’ he is indeed paraphrasing Valéry; “la sensation, c’est qui se transmet directement), unlike abstraction and figuration, explains Elkins, it does not ‘pass through the brain’.

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- All imagery in this article is credited to Asako Iwama, Iris Lacoudre, and Camille Sineau, *Hands Correspondence*, 2020, film stills. Screenshots from the 5th Istanbul Design Biennial YouTube channel retrieved from, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfrwRjYZnUU&t=13s>>.
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