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## Um exame interdisciplinar da comida na escultura

### *An Interdisciplinary Examination of Food in Sculpture*

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#### Resumo

Esta tese está dividida em duas partes para analisar o conceito de alimento e a sua relação com o corpo. Ao fazê-lo, parte 1, a minha investigação consiste em abordar como os alimentos são vistos não só como uma substância para a alimentação, mas também como material artístico. Portanto, estes corpos que consumimos diariamente são dóceis através do nosso acto de destruição e criação na prática e fora da prática. O termo corpo dócil é teorizado como um objecto maleável no qual se actua a força disciplinar. A operação dentro do termo corpo dócil; manipulação, moldado, transformado e melhorado é um acto da nossa interacção com os alimentos. Por conseguinte, é usado para dissecar em escultura o alimento é visto como sujeito quando usado como material e transformado em material. Isto redefine o que o alimento é, foi e pode tornar-se. O alimento como corpo é identificado tanto numa abordagem teórica como na prática da escultura. Esta tese tem como objectivo provar o alimento como corpo, enquanto que a parte 2 destaca uma prática reflexiva do alimento como material através de uma abordagem experimental; examinar a estética, e as propriedades dos alimentos em que influenciam e desafiam as abordagens teóricas utilizadas na parte 1.

#### Abstract

*This thesis is divided into two parts to analyze the concept of food and its relation to body. In doing so, part 1, my research consists in addressing how food is not only seen as a substance for nourishment, but as artistic material. Therefore, these bodies we consume on a daily are docile through our act of destruction and creation in practice and outside of practice. The term docile body is theorized as a malleable object in which disciplinary force is acted. The operation within the term docile body; manipulation, shaped, transformed and improved is an act of our interaction with food. Therefore, it is used to dissect in sculpture food is seen as subject when used as material and transformed into material. This re-defines what food is, was, and can become. Food-as-body is identified both in a theoretical approach as in the practice of sculpture. This thesis aims to prove food-as-body, while part 2 highlights a reflexive practice of food as material through experimental approach; to examine aesthetics, and properties in food in which influence and challenge the theoretical approaches used in part 1.*

#### Palavras-chave

corpo, memória, afectar, tornar-se, pele, corpo dócil

#### Keywords

body, memory, affect, become, skin, docile-body

## I. Introduction

The study is to position food in the realm of body, while questioning what is body, what counts as a body, and how is food correlated to body, by merging away from food being metaphorical, and symbolic. When speaking on food and body, this study will not explore the means of gender and sexuality; but rather, directing our attention to food elements that will be explored in the given works of art that are depicted in this investigation. Therefore, food will be looked at in sculpture as a bodily material, as a dynamic state of becoming body through practices, techniques and processes; as well as, through the guidance of reflexive practice and theoretical study. Processes, practices and techniques through which food comes to become body are enacted and brought into being as particular kind of entity. Embodiment is established in sculpture through the power of to affect and be affected, which, recasts food as body and as process rather than fixed substances. This will lead to explore food-as-body as socially constructed and defined as unstable entities that are extended and immersed together through specific relations of human and non-human elements to shape what food-bodies can do. The layout of the thesis will be constructed with the specific means of methodology approaches; and through reflexive practices, which will guide me to analyze and validate my position in how food is seen as body.

### The work methodology

In order to evaluate and select the appropriate sources, I began questioning the differences between food to body. The interest is not the connection between mind-body dualism; nor is it the depiction of food through the use of different materials, (cardboard, burlap, and newspaper) but rather the materiality of food and how it can be affected; what it can do, and how it can affect human and non-human material elements in sculpture. Therefore, I narrowed my sources of literature that explored the concepts of flesh, corporeality, materialism and the different perspectives on the body. In relationship to the literature, the main focus in my investigation was also indicating which artists were using food as material. I was particular in setting my ground on artists that did not use meat as a main focus in

their work, but rather other main element of food, while questioning how are these particular elements being used and transformed in sculpture? What techniques and processes are used towards food in sculpture? Do these food elements become a function when used in sculpture, if so how? What does it mean when food is embodied and become body in sculpture? In this investigation, interviews and food literature enhanced my investigation of each work of art; while, rethinking the definition of what body is. Along with these two methods, working with food as a material in practice has guide me to experiment and formulate observations that have influenced, to build on questions. One of the experiments is analyzing the outer flesh of fruits and vegetables in different states of being dried. Therefore, there is a difference between non-organic materials and the organic properties of food's mutability and the point of decay, that directs sculpture to change over time, as a lived experience.

## II. Development

### 1. Thinking through the body: To be body, to have body, to become body

As one would define a body as a physical structure of a person, or the relationship between the mental and the physically aspect of what makes a body, a body. I regard it as a material as it touches on the potentialities of what it can do. How it is connected and extended into other bodies, while touching on culture, processes, and practices. Therefore, food is discarded as a thing; but rather analyzing in the same realm of what it means to be a body. While looking at terms, to have, to be and to become body, we will dissect the differences between all three, and explore where is food positioned when questioning, what counts as a body?

"To begin to achieve an adequate analysis of the body we need to regard it as a material, physical and biological phenomenon which is irreducible to immediate social processes or classifications." (Shilling 2012:10) Cultural constructions of and about the body are useful in sustaining particular views of society and social relations. Food is socially constructed through production, preparation

with signified information that shapes our habits, and identity. Body is seen, 'an unfinished biological and social phenomenon which is transformed, within certain limits, as a result of its entry into, and participation in, society.' (2012:10) Food shapes the way we interact with one another, through our shared values, beliefs and touching on different cultural contexts, settings and practices. Bodies and worlds are blended in complex ways, we therefore will analyze the differences between being a body, and having a body.

While being a body refers to both being a lived and material body, "having a body represents the fact that we can address ourselves as Körper". (Wehrle 2019:501) Körper is linked to something that humans have, "it is experienced as a thing in the world" (2019:499) - body as corporeal. While, Leib is the bodily nature as something that human beings are, "the experience of worldly things" (2019:499) - a lived body. "Having a body, we are temporally related towards the world by moving, sensing and perceiving. In being a body, an individual discloses and explores her environment, and may be directed towards particular things or spaces that are relevant for immediate actions". (2019: 507) Although a lived body is a concrete realization of lived time, based on the engaging of the world and our tasks; being a body is temporarily in human embodiment. "This would mean that being a body refers to the domain of constituting time, while experiencing of having a body refers to an already constituted time." (2019: 506) We do not have time, but are 'inside time' (2006:196) Being a lived body signifies being operative; however, on the term operative we speak on becoming a function or having effect- living becomes an agent. Although the physicality of food is differently composed to the physiology of a human-being, the bodily qualities of food and being 'operative' is expressed through signs of decay, the nourishment when consumption takes hold. A body is not a stable entity. A body is defined as a process which is extended into and immersed within the world. When speaking on food, food is open and registered based on the ability to be affected and affect between human and non-human, material and immaterial entities. Therefore, does one need to have a body in order for it to

be considered a lived body?

"'Life' is invested into brute matter insofar as it, too, is perpetually moving, metamorphosing, or emigrating from one condition to another." (Deleuze 1992: xiv) To morph and transform is an example of formation and deformation processes of becoming. "All forces and flows (materialities) are or can become lively, affective, and signaling. And so an affective, speaking human body is not radically different from the affective, signaling nonhumans with which it coexists, hosts, enjoys, serves, consumes, produces, and competes". (Bennett 2009a:116-17) Food is always in process of becoming body in a world that finds its shape or meaning. This takes shape through our interaction that is imposed on food as bodily material in sculpture through techniques that are established by various artists; in which, will be elaborated further in this article.

## 2. Docile Body

In part three of Michel Foucault's book, *Discipline and Punish*, we see a central commitment to a view of human bodies as affects of power. Foucault treats power as constructive and productive desire that is brought about by power and knowledge. He sees the body as a unified aspect of human history which is continuous across periods. The question of body and the effects of power on it become centralized to questioning "what is the body"? He defines docile as one who is "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (1995:136). Being the body as a target of power, illustrates methods in which the body is controlled with constant coercion in armies, and monasteries. In which, the body becomes known to be machinery enabling to be rearranged or explored through movements gestures, attitudes and rapidity over the active body. He uses the idea of the modern prison system to illustrate, rethink power and its relationship to the body. Power works through our actions, it becomes a sense of being and doing. He uses the concept of positivity and productivity to describe the role power plays in producing possibilities. However, I will be using his concept of the disciplined body towards sculptural practice to illustrate the process and techniques that is incorporated to present food as bodily matter. "Power is a matter of selection and control, entitlement and

access: it is bio-power, centred on the body in its material and immaterial manifestations.” (Braidotti, 2006:53) This draws attention to the practice in sculpture and the cultural norms that become internalized and operative through the processes of subject formation.

Embodiment is a process. A process of social processes, practices that produces and gives the bodily material food to become body. It places these particular embodied entities (food) within a social structure of lived experience in which actively shapes the process of making and becoming body- the world in its becoming. This becomes a result of, ‘discursive practice...that enables and constrain disciplinary knowledge practices such as speaking, writing, thinking, calculating, measuring, filtering, and concentrating. Discursive practice produce, rather than merely describe, the “subjects” and “objects” of knowledge practices.’ (Barad 2003:819) Therefore, these practices that are established in sculpture become an agent – an affect that positions food-as-body to become a disciplined body. “Affects are forms of encounter; they circulate- sometimes ambivalently but always productively-between and within bodies (of all kinds), telling us something important about the power of affects to unravel subjectivity ...” (Blackman 2013:16) These affects can be expressed between a physical; society or biological; decomposition.

### 2.1 “Watermelon,” Steven Carr

Although, we are considering the relationship between food in sculpture, we are viewing this video and the affects that are undertaken to transition Watermelon, 2015 (figure 1) into material. Here we will begin to see food as a material in relationship to the environment; versus the bio-power that is used onto food to transform into food-as-body.

“[The artist] made the decision to film it in real time and allow the build up to be the work as oppose to the final action.” (NGV Melbourne, 2020, 0:43-0:55) This build up consists of repeated action of stretch rubber bands that are repetitively put by two women hands.

“The gesture of the hand is not a simple succession of spasms; from its inaugural phase it is a movement

commanded by its final phase. And each gesture which thus accomplishes an ordered system of changes of position... launches itself into a new trajectory of time; every gesture is by essence repeatable...into a motor habit.” (Merleau-Ponty 1968:xiviii)

Throughout the 33 min film, the pressure of 309 rubber bands slowly begin to transform and morph the watermelon into a state that is no longer “natural”. Throughout the process of the video, you begin to see change on the 210th rubber band as the juices begin to ooze and flow from the bottom half. Performativity becomes linked not only to the formation of the subject but the production of matter of bodies. Foucault’s analytic of power lined to discursive practice to the materiality of the body, displays how discursive practices produce a material body. The body constitutes the link between daily practices on the one hand and the large scale organization of power on the other. He demonstrates in study of the prison system how repetition and repeatability are central to the workings of disciplinary power. The approach to the watermelon into material, as object, a body is produced through the coming together of human and non-human elements. The elements of background noise (cars and birds), the pressure of 309 rubber bands applied onto the flesh concludes a material body meshed into the world; manifesting to become body through the embodiment of setting and process. The exchange of information, and the relationship to space, become a specific power to produce something bodily into something living. Living body, signifies the experiences that are enacted onto the material body, that gives the object an embodiment through experience. This concludes on the skin, the modification, ‘is the immediate point of contact with the physical world . . . and can also conveniently symbolise the point of contact between [people] and the social forces that surround them’ (Strathern 1977: 101). These forces become “observations of representations of violence make an individual aware of the power of such “mimetic appropriations of the world.” (O’Dell 1998 :5)

### 3. Disciplined Body: Memory through Skin as Being

In this chapter when investigating food in sculpture, as well experimenting as material, food became another form of skin. Through various processes and techniques of deconstructing the material of what is to what can be, the materiality of flesh becomes to be body as a graphic image of society embedded. This results through,

“the skin [intervening] in the things of the world and brings about their mingling. If the skin mediates the world by mingling with it, this may be because the world itself may be apprehended as a kind of flesh...” (Connor 2003:28-9)

“Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?” (Merleau-Ponty 1968:135). Although the physicality and the structure of human skin is different and reacts differently, the food elements that will be examined in this section depicts skin to be process, and a function. In which, intermixes with notions of human existence through gestures and sensory experience that activate a memory. Through memory, “the flesh is in this sense an ‘element’ of Being.” (Merleau-Ponty 1968:140) This element of being traces past events, experiences; which, allow food to attach into the world. Through these functions, dynamic process of becoming moves us to explore how they are produced and performed which gives the element of skin of food as lived experience of corporeality.

#### 3.1 “Strange Fruit,” Zoe Leonard

Zoe Leonard invites to examine, “Strange Fruit” (figure 2) from a different lens, as the material of her work does indeed mimic strange fruit, as it is composed of a variety of fruit skins; avocados, grapefruit, lemons, oranges and bananas. After the bodily substance is eaten, each peel is dried out and then “repaired” by the act of sewing up the seam she had opened after eating the inside flesh of the fruit. These objects begin to morph into resembling little bodies. As to restore its form, these delicate skins are sewed with colored thread, shiny wires and adorn with added buttons and zippers. The artist states, “this act of fixing something broken, repairing the skin of something after the fruit of it is gone, strike me as both pathetic and beautiful. At any rate, as intensely human.” (Quabeck:2019)

The action of sewing is an action of sealing a form, drawing it together with itself; in any case, arresting its transformations. This transformation is through the act of repetition, while addressing the morality and immorality of this installation. Bennett addresses this continuous pattern as, “spiral repetition that sometimes that-which-repeats itself also transform itself.” (2016b:40)

This sculptural installation touches on the private act of mourning, and the obsessive act of sewing to preserve the memory of something beloved.

“Like memory, these skins are not the substance itself, but a form reminiscent of the original.” As the essence of the piece is to decompose, “to capture the process when the fruit skins had already undergone some changes and entered a dried state.” (Quabeck:2019)

Food disappears as a material, and begins to “live”. Live signifies the experience of corporeality through decomposition, in which point relation to the morphology of the human body. This is observed through the flesh written by time.

“time’s writing on the skin, or the concealment of that writing...mark inscribed on a surface represents a decision...” (Ahmed, Stacey 2001:46) This presents what it means to be body, which again become discarded material, and experienced as both body through process.

#### 3.2 “Stroke,” Anya Gallacio

The sculptural installation, “Stroke” (figure 3) consists of a room with painted walls build up of dark chocolate. “She [uses] 40 kilos of 70 per cent cocoa solid, confectioner-quality dark chocolate.”(Duguid:2014) This installation becomes a defined space that is identified with gentle ‘strokes’. These gesture are considered to be “social relationship expressed in touching, fondling, stroking, holding, and other immediate physical manifestations.” (Scheper-Hughes, & Lock 1987: 15) It is illustrated on the surface of the material, through the participation of the participants. The alteration is depicted through a mark of a

“lick and nibble at the chocolate, [pressing] their noses to it, [scraping] bits off with their fingers.” (Duguid:2014)

The chocolate room becomes a painterly indication of memory, through gestural mark making. Because chocolate is an organic material, “there’s no temperature control in the room. What happens in the next two months depends on weather, visitors, and the alchemy of chocolate”. (Duguid:2014) With time it begins to disintegrate, and the identification of “white mold might appear and as the chocolate rots the smell should intensify. When it’s over they’ll chuck it away.” (Duguid:2014) What was a chocolate room, ends up becoming a feeling of repulsion.. What we have here, is an indication of a bodily material that is capable to transmit a sensory feel of experience. This experience is based on a smell in which identifies an identity to the material that is being used. Therefore, it leaves the participant to act, and observe the previous events that were placed onto the chocolate. Food never comes to be identical to what it was; a chocolate bar, to what it is; the formation of the chocolate room, to what it will be; decomposition. However, chocolate begins to be an articulate subject.

“who learns to be affected by others – not by itself. A subject only becomes interesting, deep, profound, worthwhile when it resonates with others, is effected, moved, put into motion by new entities whose differences are registered in new and unexpected ways.” (Latour 2004:210)

To be articulate, is the ability to express a gesture one has commit onto the material. The ability for the material to articulate is an example of embodiment becoming a process. It places this particular embodied entity within a social structure of lived experience in which is actively shaped by social process. Chocolate becomes a form of skin, which “becomes an identification of a map of the body’s surface and a reflection of the image of the other’s body.” (Grosz 1994: 38) Chocolate becomes a mirror in means to communicate. A communication established through the relation with the outside world by offering an inscribed surface for marks left by others. This inscribe mark is defined as a ‘skin drawing’ or

“dermographia’ (Stacey 1997:110)

3.3 “Smog Tasting,” Zack Denfeld and Catherine Zack Denfeld and Catherine Kramer, are the founder of the Centre for Genomic Gastronomy and have been running the smog tasting project from different cities around the world for comparison. “The smog tasting project (figure 4) makes urban air quality tangible by harvesting air from highly polluted areas...” (2011) These tasting sculptures are identified and served in merengue form. Because,

“eggs are able to harvest the air ... at the ‘stiff peak’ stage ... [egg] foam is approaching 90 per cent air, and the egg liquid has been spread so thin that the protein webs in adjacent bubble walls begin to catch on each other and on the bowl surface.” (McGee 1984: 418)

When egg whites are beaten, the air become trap while the protein begin to unfold. By making the egg foam from deflating, sugar become a stabiliser turning it into batter. This project expanded throughout cities including Mumbai, Washington, London, and Barcelona. Comparing the air quality in various regions, we begin to see that,

“London is a little gritty. Beijing, more sulfurous. Los Angeles has hints of bleach, while Atlanta smog owes its distinct flavour to a fusion of car exhausts and numerous nearby pine trees.” It showed that “agricultural smog, found at sites where pesticides and fertiliser are heavily used, had a sour smell and taste because of the ammonia. And in big cities that burn coal and have a high volume of motor vehicles, the skies are thick with sulfur and particulate matter, leading to an “acrid” and “gritty” taste.” (Chaves:2020)

The smog tasting project gives individuals taste buds a taste of what their lungs are experiencing. They are uniquely identified from one another based on color, texture, taste, and smell. Each merengue becomes a form of sculptural object, but yet the notion of agency of the eggs capacity to be affected due to the process of mixing, to the specific contexts and settings, results the egg to become a form of

tool. A tool by “doing a body in the sense of producing a body through time.” (Turner 1996:245) Egg is transformed into a narrative skin-like entity that enables awareness on air pollution as a social issue.

As the protein of the eggs trap the air it begins to migrate into other substances, as it becomes a form of inscribing identity. Figure 5, indicates the PM10: air quality for particle pollution, specifically a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Some can be particles known dust, dirt, and smoke. While, NO2 (Nitrogen dioxide) ranges from vehicles, industrial emission, off-road sources and power plants. And, VOC is emitted by burning fossil fuel; such as, oil, diesel or other materials that contain sulfur. When we come to see the essential characteristics of bodies (what they are) with a focus on how they affect other matter, we define them by what they do: their capacities.

#### 4. Reflexive Practice

When experimenting with food as a material, and extracting bits and pieces from the food elements I used in practice. In this continuing project, food began to feel and function as skin, and became a whole other material. These elements submerged as resemblance to imagery of bodily fluids, as well marks that are developed on human flesh. These forms of life are involved in a folding – or ‘doubling’ into another, through the forces of the outside. “Folding-unfolding no longer simply means tension-release, contraction dilation, but enveloping-developing, involution-evolution...an organism is enveloped by organisms, one within another... (Deleuze 1992:8) The concept of the fold, allowed Deleuze to think creatively about the production of subjectivity, about the possibilities for, and production of, non-human forms of subjectivity. Information of change under the action of exterior surrounding, or under the influence of internal force is gain and lost and becomes “to withdraw into the recesses of a world.” (1992:9) The affects and act of folding and unfolding through the forces in sculpture is an example of how bodily material becomes subject through the interaction with organic and inorganic materials. These examples are depicted below:

Blue cheese, made through microbial bacteria; penicillium, becomes in resemblance to telangiectasia. Telangiectasia is commonly known as spider veins, caused by broken blood vessels located near the surface of the skin. The blue cheese indicates a familiar appearance due to the spots and thin blue veins throughout the cheese. Through time the cheese began to turn into a rusty yellow color, while leaking the smell of rotten milk. The appearance of the cheese became hazy, these blue lines were still indicated in the material. Through the touch of light, these details were emphasized, transforming it into second skin. This second skin, in figure 6 transitions this food element into a spatial environment, of interior and exterior.

Kiwi: The brown fuzzy skin of without the dried state becomes in resemblance to peach fuzz seen on someones face. Although the texture is slight different when dried, and when touched by light, it becomes morphed into other. The brown spots figure 7 come to illustrate a connection to birthmarks, freckles or skin discoloration. These markings that are discovered through the tool of light define how the process of marks on flesh become folding of time.

Grapefruit: Figure 8, in its “natural” state, you come to notice a texture of pores. These pores are shriveled, dried and enhanced through the touch of light. These resemblance of imagery comes to define a relationship to the micro-lense of skin pores we would find on humans. The light of touch emphasis this depiction of holes becoming breathable entities.

These peels of food begin to attune to the world, as the skin begins to exist and form a boundary between the biological-organic, the social-the inorganic and the exterior to what was once interior. Through documentation and analyzation, time transform these bodily materials into something that is unrecognizable, unless it is identified.

Time takes a tool on the material, as epoxy becomes a stabilizer. With both tools meshed together, the peels become slightly different in appearance to the touch of light,

the luminous affect reveal how place and setting gets under the skin as a form to its contentedness to fluxes of materials, and the medium that surrounds them. "Light streams out from the outermost edge or surface of things, but is then slowed into manifestation as a second skin." (Connor 2004:158) Light is a transcendental phenomenon, that lets things such as, peel from fruits and vegetable manifest and fold themselves. It begins to create an environment within these elements. The approach of using light becomes an affect, a vital force in which flows through the substance, propelling a life in a process of becoming-giving life to new modes of existence- a living flesh.

### III. Conclusion

Parts of this article become a depiction of what is being explored in my investigation, when touching on what counts as a body, and how is food body. These questions are being worked through reflexive practice, while analyzing food as a main element in sculpture. When we are looking at the properties of food, and how it is used in sculpture to define food-as-body through its function. A body is defined not a thing, but a material that elaborates how social processes take hold.

Although the physicality of food to having a body is slightly different, we are establishing the affects food can have when extended and connected to other human and non-human bodies. This is being analyzed through the production of food into material through processes and techniques used in sculpture. This bio-power and interaction that is established to food as bodily material touches on the boundaries between the social and the biological, and the capacity to affect and be affected. This addresses how the concept of food being a docile body, through practices and techniques establishes the embodiment of food as subject in sculpture. This is a result of how food is extended and immersed in the world of sculpture while touching on the outcomes of lived experience.

The outcomes of lived experience is embodied experience. This embodied experience that comes to define food

as body is seen as information, and traces of marks as representative of memory. Lived experience is made of existence that is signified through the process of decay. Therefore, this recasts food as process rather than fixed entities, while re-defining what food is, and how food is body.