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Lucy Lehrman
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Honors Project
CATALOGUE ESSAY:

When the art market was hit by the current economic crisis it seemed as though the days of grandiloquent art and overindulgence in collecting were coming to an end. Alternatively, from the point of view of this show, the art world—its creators, buyers, and viewers—have an insatiable hunger to consume. The representation of foodstuffs has been a traditional subject matter in still life painting since the sixteenth century. Yet stretching even further back to the sixth century it is possible to locate gluttony as the sin of the overindulgent eater. Thus, the problem with food in art is its familiarity and its sinister implications of temptation and it has since been placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of painting genres. While all of the works in the show of course awaken our visual sense, the works shift away from the conceptual and ocular-oriented tradition of viewing art by using food as a medium to allure visitors to explore other compelling ways to digest art and to understand the potent sensory properties of foods.

Recent exhibitions have explored the subject of food in art: The Art of Eating: From ‘Still Life’ to Ferran Adria (2011) at La Pedrera in Barcelona focused on the issue of gastronomy as an art form; Let Them Eat LACMA (2010) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Eat Art: International Migration Art Festival (2011) revolved around specific cultures’ culinary habits; Eating the Universe: Food and Art (2009) at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf traced food as subject and material in art from its origins until today while the more playful Bittersweet: The Chocolate Show (2010) at Rutgers University explored the history of chocolate and its social implications. Food is clearly a fundamental interface between art and life but no show to date has used food as object and subject to isolate the five senses into autonomous categories demarcated by their artwork and use the surfaces of the body as a meeting ground for complex sensory experiences that promise pleasure even as they caution against excess. One of the most widespread beliefs about eating concerns overindulgence and the risks associated

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1 International Migration Art Festival was a traveling art fair that came to Milan, New York, Los Angeles, and London. For more information look to the website: www.imafestival.com.
therewith. The punishments suffered by the modern glutton are more complex than eternal damnation within a society that places extreme emphasis on fitness and thinness. As the gap between rich and poor grows wider and health crazes and the processed food industry becomes more prevalent, issues of self-control are at the forefront of this exhibition.

While science of the senses has developed, there still remains a traditional hierarchy developed by Plato and Aristotle which has led theory to develop in ways that overlook the complexity of aesthetic perception. The division between seeing and hearing—the high senses—and taste, smell and touch—the low senses—concerns the degree of bodily proximity and subjectivity.² It is generally accepted in Western culture that the distance one achieves between the perceived object while seeing or hearing is a “cognitive, moral, and aesthetic advantage,” because the mind can act separately from the body and has the potential freedom to explore outer worlds of intellect and spirituality.³ Tasting, smelling, and touching are seen as primitive and emotionally charged actions mostly because these practices evolved for protective purposes necessary to stay alive.⁴ The bodily senses most easily tempt corporeal sins of gluttonous or lustful behavior because they require physical interaction, but when food or sex is in the picture the distance senses may also be misused and seen as senses of temptation as they place the perceiver as voyeur, obsessing over food fantasies.⁵ “Too soon, too delicately, too expensively, too greedily, too much” are the five ways in which, according to Gregory the Great, gluttony reveals itself.⁶ Precisely because the senses both tempt people to sample diverse foods and, paradoxically, make them obsess over the horror of obesity,

Americans have become a culture of gluttons. Physical appetites test people’s ability to control themselves; this exhibition challenges visitors’ temperance as it provokes the senses to become uninhibited within an otherwise strictly visual environment. While gluttony is traditionally the sin of overindulgence, in a “post-Freudian world” people have learned to eroticize food, classifying lust as the prime motivators for all desire. Both the fastidious and vulgar representations of food in this show give viewers the opportunity to reflect on their own bodies within the space and keep track of what they are ingesting whether it is knowledge or excess.

**TACTILE**

The tactile sense develops prior to others and is not confined to a particular sense organ; the experiences arising from the skin are varied. The somatosensory system enables people to read tactile sensory input modalities such as presence, weight, pressure, temperature, and pain. Humans touch to seek, investigate, and spread knowledge and substance. Tactile attributes of food and drink such as temperature, texture and viscosity as well as its packaging have a profound influence on the experience of food and are sources of sensory stimulation. The experience of touch is similar to eating in that it is fundamental, basic, primitive, and more direct than intellectual occurrences; it refers to experience as well as objects. The unconscious connections to danger, emotion, childhood, play, and sexuality make the haptic experience of food art especially powerful. When people touch something they experience visceral stimulation that spreads from the point of contact throughout the body and enables them to reach an objective descriptive analysis and subjective response. Because of the limitations cultural

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institutions place upon touching art gallery-goers are hungry to touch and acquire knowledge from this alternative museum experience.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres' candy pile *Untitled (USA Today)* (Fig.1; Museum of Modern Art, 1990) provokes visitors into the transgressive experience of touching art. Touch coordinates with vision more than any other sense because it provides concrete information about objects; when visitors see the pile of shiny wrappers from a distance, they approach it to ascertain tactiley what lies beneath. The candy is piled on the floor lackadaisically as to extend itself out to the audience and invite an immediate and local sensory interaction. If visitors are just looking at the pile on the floor they're not activating the work and not fulfilling a typical human desire to feed their appetites and take food placed in front of them. Touch provides visitors with the sensory information to consider the material of candy, to question it as an art object, and consider how this intimate experience of touch will last in their memories well beyond the museum visit. Perhaps the most telling experience occurs a week or even months later when a visitor finds the crumpled, shiny paper in the jacket pocket and feels the adrenaline rush again. The moral question to counter this act of generosity is, how much is too much when the pile is forever replenished? Faced with the chance to possess an original piece of an artwork, the visitor who takes a handful of candy instead of just one piece may be seen as excessive and greedy.

In the case of food art, self-control and corporeal experience are central issues explored in the haptic-oriented work. The qualities of consistency and feel provide the bulk of people’s vocabulary of disgust. It is hard to name slime or indicate something that is gooey without the term taking on negative aesthetic baggage. If at first visitors are seduced by the color and texture of Naomi London’s forty-eight by fourteen foot *Marmalade Wall* (Fig. 2; Center for Contemporary Canadian Art, 2000) the effects of touching the piece are less satisfying. Sticky material can adhere to anything and is associated with the power of contagion, even in the sanitized space of a museum. The
massive display of food that has been used like a thick coat of paint on the gallery wall begs for attention but a viewer’s typical gallery experience has not prepared her or him for this, a work with a sweet and sticky qualities that lure the viewer much like that tar pit lured Br’er Rabbit. At gluttony’s root is a lack of self-control, and visitors’ self-discipline is tested when asked to touch something sticky within the confines of a museum. London’s work makes the audience reconsider what they put in their mouths even if it appears shiny, golden, and sweet smelling. The seemingly sweet substance has the power to decay, congeal, and spread rapidly to other parts of one’s body or someone or something else.

**OLFACTORY**

While touching is the most elementary sense, the olfactory sense enables a person’s preliminary taste of food even though the substance to be ingested lies outside the body. Olfaction discerns taste qualities and the pleasures of food. Human sense of smell acts as a defense mechanism protecting people from ingesting foul substances that omit pungent, funky, or noxious odors. Intense smells can trigger pleasure and can even revert into the opposite, repugnance, according to the length of exposure time. These odors have durations that can be re-experienced and reminds people what they should eat, what they like to eat, and what is spoiled. Olfactory nerves go first to the region of the brain called the limbic system, a collection of structures that deal with emotion, memory, and motivation. That is why when people smell certain food scents they are reminded of childhood memories of indulgence or the smell of grandma’s house during Thanksgiving, but bad odors have the power to kill desire. Adding to the prejudice against olfactory art, Americans have a limited vocabulary with which to describe involuntary response sensations so they often name odors for their source like the smell

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of herbs or the sea.\textsuperscript{14} The artists in this exhibition arouse visitors' brains with scents and challenge them to critically describe the invisible nature of smell.

If visitors consider the smells emitting from the thirty-seven suitcases filled with cheese in Dieter Roth’s *Staple Cheese (A Race)* (Fig. 3; Eugenia Butler Gallery, 1970) it is clear that the museum is no longer “neutral” or “odorless.”\textsuperscript{15} Unwrapped blocks of cheddar, Limburger, Camembert, Brie, and other kinds of cheese initially appear in consumable form but gradually they become disgusting. The sheer mass of cheese makes the reeking installation capable of reaching the noses of visitors before they can even visualize the work. Bad smells have a way of lodging themselves in noses and creating “stinky” attitudes but it is a powerful means for challenging the distance and detachment central to normative museum viewing. In response to the rapacious viewer who steps too close to the cases and is plagued by the smells of decaying cheese, art critic William Wilson comments that, “we have a chance to test the ideas that art gets better as it gets older.”\textsuperscript{16} Food has a life of its own beyond the control of institutions; the deterioration of the cheese indicates another change within the museum, the impermanence of art. Any scent, no matter how foul, unusual or commonplace, can be transformed into a meaningful artistic experience. Engaging an audience’s sense of smell brings about complex (and conflicting) attitudes towards conventional assumptions about aesthetic experience.

Because smells travel to the cortex via the limbic system, the emotional epicenter of the brain, they have the ability to “contaminate” people’s minds or produce passions that tempts the body into impulsive overindulgence.\textsuperscript{17} By nature, olfactory art works secrete scents that extend and permeate their ideas far beyond their material borders, unabashedly contaminating the people and objects in space that come within proximity to

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\textsuperscript{15} Shiner and Kriskovets, “Smelly Art,” 275.


\textsuperscript{17} Jacob, “The Science of Taste and Smell,” 185-187.
the works. Thomas Rentmeister’s massive piles of potato chips that compose the work *Earthapfelroom* (Earth Apple Room) (Fig. 4; Frankfurt Museum for Modern Art, 2007) is a playful approach to the immaculate appearance of minimalism that harks back to Walter De Maria’s *Earth Room* (1977). Minimalist, highly finished, mechanical surfaces made to buck the trend of overconsumption have been replaced by heavy accumulations of potato chips that emanate a smell of salt and grease and tempt the viewer to be aware of their body in space and time, a key aspect of Minimalist art. A philosophical prejudice going back to Aristotle places odors akin to people’s animal nature because smell has phenomenally subjective aspects. Odors are sent to the hypothalamus and ignite a feeling of urgency within people to try the substance.\(^8\) Perhaps this is what drives observers to approach Rentmeister’s piles and prompts in them a desire to wade in the sea of potato chips. While responses to smells are primarily seen as sensorial because they make people contemplate not the object but the experience derived from it, there is also a cognitive component: how not to succumb (language of sin!) and over-consume when tempted by an abundance of appetizing treats. By isolating the olfactory sense and prohibiting viewers from consuming the chips, Rentmeister is able to show how these smells reach the limbic system and induce the pleasurable memories of indulgence from, say, childhood, but also how the sheer mass of foodstuff can also trigger a feeling of revulsion. The gluttonous flow of chips demonstrates the crucial moment when the scales are tipped, when pleasure turns to aversion. Gluttony wastes what others could more profitably use and while Rentmeister’s work is not a merciless representation of the downsides of American food culture it does present a telling image of a society suffocated by its own affluence. Gluttony is indulgence not only in the pleasure of taste but in the sheer quantity of food.

\(^8\) Jacob, “The Science of Taste and Smell,” 186.
GUSTATORY

The sensory factors in humans that govern which foods are selected to eat include smell and texture, but gustation interacts with food internally and delivers sensations that travel throughout the body as the food moves in the mouth, throat, and down the digestive track. The gustatory system involves taste buds on the tongue that respond to combinations of sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami flavors, or more broadly the chemicals in food and drink. Taste is highly subjective because the numbers of papillae and taste receptors within the papillae vary tremendously from person to person and are responsible for distinguishing what he or she likes from what he or she does not and what is nutritional necessity. Personal tastes are further multiplied when one takes into account the fact that acts of tasting occur within cultural contexts where eating traditions accustom people to a specific range of food that may be subject to change as time passes, climate alters, and societies develop. Through tasting, food products are ingested into the body and, depending on flavor and quantity, can dramatically affect bodily moods and responses that range from feelings of déjà vu to involuntary reflexes like vomiting. Philosophers from Plato to the present insist on the distinction between gustatory activities and aesthetic taste, but these artists use the mouth as the portal to dissolve the object into the subject and focus on the gustatory sense to direct attention to what fine art could never do, such as nourish, decay teeth, cause allergies, and disappear!

Sonja Alhauser’s Exhibition Basics (Fig.5; Busch-Reisinger Museum, 2001) makes visitors responsible for pleasurably ingesting, destroying, and changing the artwork. Gustatory artwork is transitory because the material is living (organic) and therefore this piece relies predominantly on the interaction between the visitor’s body and the ingestion of sweet pedestals to take in the work before nature does. The pedestals are made of delicious things: chocolate, marzipan, caramel and popcorn. Alhauser’s work elicits a childlike curiosity calling upon visitors’ gustatory sense to address the satisfying

aspects of consuming sugar that makes them feel mischievous for indulging the highly caloric substance but sweetens their days. Each bite can trigger halcyon memories of youthfulness or prompt an arousing effect from the opiates produced in the brain; human preference for sweet-tasting substances is innate.\textsuperscript{21} These works promote a kind of gallery-viewer sin in that they are to literally devour a work of art. In this process of “incorporation where the art actually ‘becomes’ the beholder,” visitors will feel the painful effects of voracious indulgence like stomach pains or regurgitation.\textsuperscript{22}

Gluttony stands for sins that favor instant gratification, and Jennifer Rubell’s installation \textit{Old Fashioned} (Fig.6; Rubell Collection, 2009) is placed centrally on the interface between pleasure and greed where high art and low food culture converge. The treats are available in abundance and therefore seduce the viewer into tasting and consuming. 1,521 donuts hanging in a grid formation on a massive 8-foot by 60-foot wall visually evolves as people consume them. The audience is grounded with the familiar material of the doughnut but surprised by the unpredictable option to indulge at will. While the brain says “no” the body and its taste receptors are attracted to the rich flavor of fatty substances as calories provide quicker sensations of satiety and energy than proteins and produce greater levels of serotonin and dopamine in the brain which generally induce positive emotions. The bodily experience that ensues from the act of devouring provokes intoxication, which in turn prompts the sensation of gluttony. The pleasurable aspects of eating sweets will surely tempt some to overindulge and feelings of disgust will become inevitable. Temperance is the only way for the piece to endure.

\textbf{AURAL}

Tasting food does not only activate the gustatory sense; while audition has a long and revered history in the musical arts, it is the sense most commonly overlooked when people think about their experience preparing, eating, or regurgitating food. Considered a

\textsuperscript{22} Fisher, “Relational Sense,” 8.
"high" sense within the hierarchy of senses, the element of distance associated with audition affords humans an experience comparatively detached from those that are phenomenally subjective. The auditory cortex is involved in tasks such as identifying and segregating auditory objects and enables people to discern facts like whether a food is solid or liquid and fresh or stale. Opening food packaging precedes consumption; these sounds trigger an expectancy effect. Different foodstuffs produce particular sounds that are good indicators of taste, freshness, and texture, like the crunchy sound of chips.\textsuperscript{23} Emphatic "yuumm"s or "ick"s serve as aural attestation to the quality of the dish. Just hearing the word "bacon" can influence people to think of the food and can even add flavor to whatever they are eating.\textsuperscript{24}

Antonio Miralda’s work \textit{Texas TV Dinner} (Fig. 7; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 1977) is not the usual buffet because visitors’ primary measure of taste is through hearing by means of seven video screens sunk into a table; headphones complete the work. The large screens are placed horizontally as if they are dishes or trays. Miralda aims to supply a sociological portrait of Houston through the meal—detailing processes of preparation and consumption of various local specialties from hamburgers to French cuisine.\textsuperscript{25} Beside each screen Miralda places a small stand with spices and condiments to further tantalize the audience’s hunger but the artist is only capable of feeding the aural appetite for food with the sizzling sounds of grilling meat and repetitious chomps emitting from the videotaped consumers. Hearing food be prepared or eaten heightens a person’s expectancy effect and intensifies feelings of hunger; visitors may be inclined to dump the condiments out on their hand but Miralda uses the element of distance to have visitors practice their temperance and identify the relationship between sound and hunger.

\textsuperscript{24} Charles Spence et al., “Sound Bites,” 224.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{De gustibus non disputandum: Miralda} (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), 36.
Processes of ingestion and preparation are not the only sounds associated with food. People's negative encounters with food can be identified by self-produced sounds that cue disgust like a violent gag or the word "ick." Today, inner emptiness and attractive outer appearance may go hand in hand so portion control or binge eating consumes many. Eating disorders such as bulimia are commonly associated with gluttony even though they are acknowledged as medical diseases, for bulimics ritually stuff themselves with food to the bursting point only to regurgitate and waste what others could profitably use. As an affluent nation, people binge and starve and binge again, swinging from food-related anxiety to depression and guilt to pursuing sensory pleasure in food addiction. In Elke Krystufek’s work *Vomiting/Eating* (Fig. 8; Generali Foundation, 1992) a camera observes the artist, then suffering from an eating disorder, throwing up in the toilet and then, as if compensating for the resulting emptiness, maniacally stuffing her mouth with food. The sound of vomit is familiar to all and is predominantly indicative of over-eating, the consumption of toxic foods, or a serious body image disorder.

**VISUAL**

Rarely is our sense of sight considered last in the museum context. While all works presented thus far acknowledge the aspect of sight, they seek to cultivate visitors’ attention away from the dominant sense. In a waning late modernist ocular-centrism there are only a few food artists that produce works which are so repulsive and viscerally shocking that it is best to consume them with only the eyes. Similar to the aural sense, visual experiences require distance between the object and organ of perception than can aid temperance. Visual perception is used to objectively discern the color of food and plays a role in identifying flavor and its intensity and even controls the speed at which people reach satiety.  

visualize these works that show great concern for contemporary issues with food that range from obesity and to food waste.

Silvio Giordano’s *Raw* (Fig.9; Silvio Giordano, 2011) speaks to the beastial nature of food consumption. The artist imagines the monstrous creature that humans will evolve into if they continue to devour food without conscience or distinction. To do this Giordano uses a whole pig thigh (prosciutto) and inserts dentures into its cured and fatty skin. The jaw is opened as if it is yelling at the viewer to account for culturally excessive eating habits, which the artist feels is part of an unsustainable lifestyle. Viewing these traditionally prized meats from a distance makes visitors cognizant of the fact that they cannot just ingest anything no matter how delicious it appears. Fat is no longer considered a sign of wealth in America; rather, it suggests the plight of the less fortunate who have no choice but to eat food that is nutritionally detrimental to their appearance and temperance.27 As obesity levels rise to an all-time high, health consciousness has transformed gluttony from a sin that leads to other sins to an illness that leads to other illnesses.

The fragile nature of the human condition and the vanity of humanity’s efforts became the theme of a particular type of still life painting during the 16th and 17th centuries in Flanders and the Netherlands. Sam Taylor-Wood’s *Still Life* (Fig.10; White Cube Gallery, 2001) video is based upon this classical genre that critiques the vanity of worldly things through signs of elapsing time and decay. The video brings this ordinary genre of foodstuff to life, albeit through the very process of its decay. A beautiful bowl of tempting fruit degenerates at an accelerated pace, compressing weeks into minutes, and creating a visceral memento mori. The work seduces viewers with sumptuous organic fruits while exploring the brevity of life and the folly of material excess. Viewers are offered momentary enjoyment that’s fleeting, compared to the more lasting joys and rewards that come from hard work.

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27 Prose, *Gluttony*, 3-5.
This exhibition suggests that a more dynamic aesthetic analysis can elucidate the significance of art's sensorial aspects in the production of knowledge. These artists use materials not usually associated with fine art practice to explore familiar sensory experiences in an environment that encourages contemplative engagement rather than one's usual passive contemplation with food. It is necessary to acknowledge how isolating the senses for analysis in this essay may lead to a neglect of how the senses work together. Work on food and on the senses has converged through the concept of synesthesia, or the integration of the senses. As Sutton argues, "Synesthesia is a reminder of why food and the senses should be considered together: [...] tastes are not separable from the objects being tasted."\(^{28}\) This exhibition is able to achieve this by mixing the works together within the gallery space. But, sensory isolation allows for perceptual refinement, which contributes to the appreciation and evaluation of food and understanding the mediating role of sensations between the natural world and one's understanding of it. Here surfaces of the body become the meeting ground for new dimensions of sensory experience that both test our temperance and leave visitors wanting more somatic experiences within the museum.

\(^{28}\) Sutton, "Food and the Senses," 218.
INTRODUCTION

*A Sensuous Feast: Contemporary Art, Food, and the Five Senses* exposes the power of the non-visual senses in evoking a more corporeal and overwhelming museum experience that feeds visitors' sensory deprived hunger but also reminds them of the pleasures and pains of exercising gluttonous behavior. The artists in this show isolate the five senses into autonomous categories demarcated by their food-related artwork to trigger complex somatic responses. The works of art are placed fluidly within the galleries, not bound by the sense they arouse, to ultimately show how the senses feed off one another. Prod, sniff, taste, listen, and view to eliminate the imaginary divide between thinking and feeling.

TACTILE

There is an enticing naughtiness to touching and even disturbing the presentation of art in an institutional space, especially upon realization that the objects are edible. The artists in this category present food art that is to be consumed by the bold act of touching. A sculpture’s texture, temperature, hardness, presence and weight are determined by touch and thus stimulate our senses from one point of contact to the rest of the body. These works are multisensory but all one has to do is touch to participate. Touching is intimate and personal but whether the work “touches” us depends on what we take away from it.

OLFACTORY

Cooking and smell belong to the allegedly “minor” arts and senses but by creating olfactory art and combating the “odor-phobic” nature of society, these specific artists arouse visitors’ brains with scents and challenge visitors to critically explore the invisible
nature of smells. The actions of breathing in and taking nourishment have both physical and emotional consequences that collapse the rigid dichotomies between self and object. As much as odors mark the material transitions of a food substance, smells and ingested substances can initiate changes in perceivers themselves.

GUSTATORY

To use all the senses to evaluate an artwork is to consume it in the most literal way. For centuries people have been tortured by tantalizing tromp l’oeil still lives that leave mouths watering and stomachs grumbling. The artists presented in the gustatory realm of this show challenge the hegemony of vision in favor of a lived experience with the works and do away with the sterile confines of the institution. Whether visitors chew it around, gulp it down, or throw it up, works by these artists are feeding their natural appetite forcing a purely subjective gut reaction. Situations involving edible art are transient; thus, it must be eaten or it will rot, mold, and fester in a variety of smelly, repulsive and unpleasant ways. So whether indulging is perceived as an act of gluttony or as feeding intellectual or emotional hunger the viewer is responsible for determining how the work tastes and whether or not it appeases or hampers his or her appetite.

AURAL

The sense that is most often overlooked when people think about the consumption of food and drink is hearing. Fresh foods and dry food products have characteristic sounds when people bite into or chew them that can indicate different levels of freshness. Though it is generally considered impolite to chew aloud, sounds that originate from people preparing, eating or regurgitating food generates an expectancy effect that may make mouths water or lips purse in disgust. If food both attracts and repels diners the sounds they make accordingly are early and distant warnings of taste perception.
In the art world the most common practice is visual consumption. In the typical gallery visitors are prohibited from touching, smelling, or tasting what is placed before their eyes. Eyes let people "taste" food at a distance, activating the sense memories of taste and smell or determining through color, texture, and shape if they want to or can eat it. The artists focusing on food and visual sensations in this show are primarily concerned with keeping that distance for they present food-related artwork that is so gruesome and repugnant it can only be digested with the eyes. These artworks show great concern for contemporary eating habits and the effects they have on bodies and social attitudes from the meat we consume to the meat on our bones.
Jennifer Rubell has created an original adaptation to her *Padded Cell* (2010) commissioned for this exhibition, now entitled *Padded Hallway* (Fig.11; 2012). The original cell was a large freestanding room lined on the inside with pink cotton candy. It is every person's dream to be trapped in a Willy Wonka-like room that contains pink fluffy clouds of everyone's favorite childhood sweet, but for this exhibition Rubell changes the layout and creates a claustrophobic entrance vestibule 3 by 16 feet that is padded with a whopping 1,600 cones of cotton candy. The installation is carved straight out of the hedonist's dream and by allowing people to do what they know they're not supposed to in a museum the excitement leads them to touch overindulgently.

Essentially, the work sheds light on the threatening nature of this sweet substance and leaves a sticky remnant on the hands and faces of all visitors complicit in the work's destruction. Sticky substances have the power of contamination and the ability to adhere to anything. No matter whether visitors are trying to escape or embrace the work, the dimensions of it leave them with almost no choice but to touch the walls of this confining hallway. The texture is airy, almost heavenly, and the color appears innocent but touch reveals the substance's ability to provide a mass caloric infiltration. Rubell invites visitors to touch and eat the sickly sweet, intentionally excessive *Padded Hallway* to addresses the price of or the dark side of pleasure.
Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto's *E.O. Bicho* (Fig. 12; Galeria Fortes Villaça, 2001) elevates spices from the realm of mere recipe ingredients to sensuous, animated materials in and of themselves. Neto fills his translucent elastic fabric with weighty amounts of cloves, black pepper, and turmeric, stretching the membrane that separates art and life, and drops them on the floor to form abstract compositions of scent, color, and shape. Vast quantities of fragrant odors swell the fabric and protrude out into the gallery and physically invade the body creating an atmosphere entirely dependent on the viewer's associations with the odor. In this case, the warm, spicy, woody smell of cloves stimulates memories and arouses taste associations from Christmastime or winter festivities. Neto certainly flirts with excess but his intention is to create an exercise of intensity for the audience to strengthen analytical skills and to perceive mixtures of odors as qualitatively distinct from one another while simultaneously ascertaining the subjective component associated with odors that makes people contemplate not the object but the experience derived from it; a fusion of mind and body occurs. Does having good intentions save Neto from being immorally excessive? The answer is no. We do not need such a quantity of spice to quantify this olfactory experiment, but it looks better that way. These works are undeniably sexy; they reveal their own interior and exterior and satisfy voyeuristic tendencies. Clove is a mood enhancer known for stimulating the brain and uplifting depression. It is also considered an aphrodisiac so watch out for those amorous advances while you pass through the installation.
For the New York and Chiang Mai–based Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, his art is what you eat. For his recreation of the performance entitled *Untitled 1992 (Free)* (Fig. 13, Rirkrit Tiravanija, 1992) Tiravanija emptied the office of this gallery only to replace it with a temporary kitchen complete with refrigerator, rice steamers, cooking utensils, and tables and chairs. He will be cooking a Thai curry dish and offering it to all visitors to serve themselves and eat. For free. Tiravanija initiates the performance of eating through cooking and entices viewers to participate by offering them a bountiful amount of food. The flavors are foreign to the average American or European visitor and the sensations of unfamiliar flavors on the tongue raises issues about cultural integration, no matter how ubiquitous Thai restaurants may be in urban centers. One reason the artist gives away the food is to undermine the greed and possessiveness that is so typical of our times. But this type of work suffers the fate of its own enclosure within what is essentially a protective white cube space. Those who encounter the work are hungry to learn and motivated by the infrequent opportunity to eat food—especially such a potent, colorful, and messy dish—in a gallery. Gallery-goers do not need to be given Tiravanija’s free curry. This work could have been better served had it been located outside the museum and more accessible to the homeless. But the museum space offers a contemplative venue for the gluttonous audience to participate in a shared activity and to confront themselves with this continuous culinary situation, namely what and how they eat.
For the audio project *Classical Student Menu* (Fig.14; Papier Brouillon and Resonance fm, 2008) French artist Coraline Janvier feeds her audience with the sounds that accompany preparing and ingesting food. Listeners can discern familiar sounds from the kitchen like a liquid being poured into a delicate glass vessel, a knife spreading a condiment on top of crisp toast, and the clanking of pots, dishes, and utensils. It may be difficult to discern what each food specifically is, but each product bears a distinct aural texture that suggests its density to provide further clues for identifying the product. The sounds encourage viewers to imagine the pleasant smells and tastes of what is being aurally served up for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The ability to both hear and taste the sound of a foodstuff is referred to as synesthesia. Hearing a particular sound, like that of cutting a flakey bread, can prompt one to perceive the specific taste of the imagined substance. The sounds exhibit the rate in which food is prepared and consumed, indicating the level of this person's hunger and how good the final product is. The quiche with goat cheese, pasta with sausages, toast with hummus, glass of wine, a yogurt, and a cup of tea that Janvier whips up are all calorie free in this context. But ears may trigger a conditioned expectancy effect that will cause the now hungry visitor to eat one too many bites of the edible works offered to you by the other artists in this show.
Daniel Spoerri, the father of “Eat Art,” a term he invented for art made with food that focuses on issues of eating and taste, is most famous for his ‘snare-pictures’ of the fixed remains of friends’ meals. Dishes, utensils, food remains, and empty cigarette cartons are adhered to the tabletop and create the surface of the trap pictures. A group of participants are asked to dine and are unaware of the fact that a moment of that meal will be captured, its contents affixed to the table, and that table hung on the wall of a gallery or museum. The result is a three-dimensional “photograph,” as the artist claims, of an unrepeatable event. Spoerri is interested in capturing specific times such as just after a meal as he does with Swiss Ticino-crockery (Fig.15; Levy Gallery, 1992). Nouveau Realist picture-traps are visually inviting but their theme echoes issues of vanitas and the 17th-century still life’s dialectic of abundance and negation. Trapping a moment of existence is the death of that moment as well. The scraps and remnants of someone else’s meal are certainly not appetizing, especially when they are glued to a table for extended periods of time and left to decompose. The thought of ingesting the work with anything other than one’s eyes is repulsive. Viewers are instead supposed to look at the group of familiar objects on the table and see all that is wasted and re-examine the familiar in order to try and find a new perspective on human waste. Spoerri practices the virtue of temperance by making art out of waste and preaches the same to his audience by using his participant’s waste to emphasize present day issues of affluence and hunger.
Figures (Alphabetical by Artist)

**Alhauser, Sonja**
*Exhibition Basics*, 2001
800 pounds of Belgian chocolate, marzipan, popcorn, caramel
2 x 2 x 4 feet
Courtesy of Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University
Figure 5

**Giordano, Silvio**
*Raw*, 2011
Ham, denture, rope
23 x 23 x 13 inches
Courtesy of the artist
Figure 9

**Gonzalez-Torres, Felix**
*Untitled (USA Today)*, 1990
300 lbs. of wrapped candies
Each candy 2¼ x 13/16 x 1 inch
Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Figure 1

**Janvier, Coraline**
*Classical Student Menu* from “Le Menu Gastrophonique” ep. 13, 2008
Audio
Courtesy of the artist, Papier Brouillon, and Resonance fm
http://papier.brouillon.free.fr/menugast.html
Figure 14

**Krystofek, Elke**
*Vomiting/Eating*, 1992
Video, color, sound
Approx. 1 hour
Courtesy of Generali Foundation, Vienna
Figure 8

**London, Naomi**
*Marmalade Wall*, 2000
Orange marmalade, pectin, sugar
45 x 14 feet
Courtesy of the Center for Contemporary Canadian Art, Winnipeg
Figure 2

**Miralda, Antonio**
*Texas TV Dinner*, 1977
Seven video monitors, glass headphones, salt, pepper, ketchup, soy sauce, mustard
Approx. 5 min, color
Courtesy of Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
Figure 7

**Neto, Ernesto**
*E.O. Bicho*, 2001
Lycra tulle, polyamide tubes, hooks, cloves, turmeric, black pepper
Rentmeister, Thomas
*Earthapfelroom* (Earth Apple Room), 2007
Potato Chips
c. 2 1/2 x 16 x 8 feet
Courtesy of Museum for Modern Art, Frankfurt
Figure 4

Roth, Dieter
*Staple Cheese (A Race)*, 1970
40 suitcases filled with cheese
Dimensions vary
Courtesy of Eugenia Butler Gallery, Los Angeles
Figure 3

Rubell, Jennifer
*Old Fashioned*, 2009
1,521 donuts, wood, water barrels
8 x 60 feet
Courtesy of the artist and Rubell Collection
Figure 6

Rubell, Jennifer
*Padded Hallway*, 2012
1,600 cones of cotton candy
3 x 16 feet
Courtesy of the artist, Lucy Lehrman, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London
Figure 11

Spoerri, Daniel
*Swiss Ticino-crockery* from Sevilla-Series no. 29, 1992
“Eaten by...”: workers during the construction of the Swiss pavilion
Assemblage/collage
31 x 73 x 15 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Levy Gallery, Hamburg
Figure 15

Taylor-Wood, Sam
*Still Life*, 2001
35mm film/DVD
3 minutes 44 seconds
Courtesy of White Cube Gallery
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIzXWGcb3u0
Figure 10

Tiravanija, Rirkrit
*Untitled (Free)*, 1992
Vegetable curry, rice, refrigerator, pots, hot plates, rice steamers, tables and stools
Dimensions will vary
Courtesy of the artist
Figure 13
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Lycra tulle, polyamide tubes, hooks, cloves, turmeric, black pepper

Dimensions will vary

Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo
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**Rirkrit Tiravanija**  
*Untitled (Free)*, 1992  
Vegetable curry, rice, refrigerator, pots, hot plates, rice steamers, tables and stools  
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Courtesy of the artist

Figure 14
**Coraline Janvier**  
*Classical Student Menu* from "Le Menu Gastrophonique" ep. 13, 2008  
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