"Project Synesthetic Design," 2012, STIMULI & Jinhyun Jeon

Eating is one of the most universal staples of community and life. Kima Cargill, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Washington, considers eating a "rite of passage," acknowledging food's capacity to "connect to our ancestors and tell a story [about] a cultural narrative." By breaking bread and clinking glasses, we effectively craft a form of theater around food, prioritizing the companionship of eating over the taste of food itself.

It is no secret that taste plays a pivotal role in empowering the eating experience. In addition to detailing the food we consume, taste activates unanticipated thoughts and emotions. The sense shapes our moods and mannerisms and allows the simplest of stimuli to evoke the most distant and meaningful memories.

But recent and developing trends in food technology and processing seem to overlook taste. "Ready-to-drink" products offered by biotech companies like Soylent prioritize quick calorie intake over the poetics of taste. Lab-grown meats suggest a future that champions synthetics and technological aptitude over flavor. And food scarcities for so much of the world - not to mention the post-pandemic environment we find ourselves in - qualify a prioritization of taste as an irrelevant and misguided enterprise.

So what might the future hold for eating and enjoying food through taste? What analog and digital technologies can we use to test alternative models of dining? And how might we use taste to activate food in meaningful and responsible ways?

ASSIGNMENT

You will design for a future dining experience that capitalizes on the powerful capacities of taste. Using any form of design media, you will create alternative cutlery, tableware, or an entire dining experience that provokes taste in a meaningful way. You may consider building from a previous project, or exploring an entirely new design problem. At a minimum, you must:

✓ Assess how your skill sets relate to those of your classmates by reviewing the Skill Map tab of the Project Groups spreadsheet. Organize into groups and update the P_04 tab of the same spreadsheet;

Each project group must consist of 2-4 students. You must diversify your groups with students learning on and off campus. No one may work alone.

✓ Research precedents that explore taste, communal dining, and associative memory. Identify an opportunity for intervention and develop an argument;

Explore the exciting world of food-technology and hone in parts of this trend that you find problematic. Take a position on how these practices are shaping future ways of dining. Choose a problem to address and speculate on a future way of tasting food.

✓ Prototype your own version of cutlery or tableware, or tell a story of how you'd design for a future dining experience;

You may explore taste at the scale of a simple eating utensil, or start to curate a whole dining experience. You are encouraged to pursue conceptual design methods in lieu of realism; your priority should be to convince your audience of your design through provocative storytelling. Video, animation, and physical prototyping are all valid design methods for this project.

✓ Carefully curate your project into a PDF - either using the provided template or something you've crafted on your own. Embed a PDF link to the P_04 tab of the Project Groups Sheet, and email me the link for grading by the deadline.

Ensure that the privileges associated with your link are made public. In addition to posting the PDF link, please email it to me.

Your project may involve any level of conceptualism, satire, or realism. Be creative, have fun, and tell a provocative story.

DELIVERABLES & DEADLINES

Each project will likely take on various forms, but you will still need to clearly communicate your project as a PDF submission. Be thoughtful in how you curate your work. While you are welcome to use the provided Figma template, you're also encouraged to develop your own template if you think it would better showcase your work.

Please upload your PDF to the Project Groups Sheet and email me a link by 11:59 PM on Monday, Nov 11.

Curate	Produce a PDF of intent, process, & result
Submit	Email me links to final submission(s) for grading
	Post final submission(s) to Project Groups Sheet for in-class review
Present	Use PDF and other optional materials to walk us through your project

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

In addition to the assigned texts for this week's Reading Group, the following links might help you develop your design project and argument. While relevant examples from artists, designers, and think tanks will be discussed in class, a list of precedents is intentionally absent from this brief to encourage you to think creatively and with an open mind.

You are highly encouraged to survey the references below:

2017	Olfactory Dream Machine	*Emilie Baltz*
2020	New York Times	*"What We Eat During a Plague"*
2012	Harvard Press	*"Food and Memory"*