



Tales of a recipe

An artistic inquiry on how cuisine becomes art

Nicolò Arnoldi

BACHELOR'S THESIS
May 2020

Media and arts
Fine arts

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Media and arts
Fine arts

Nicolò Arnoldi
Tales of a recipe
An artistic inquiry on how cuisine becomes art

Bachelor's thesis 53 pages
May 2020

This study inquires on the question: how can cuisine be part of the contemporary art scene? The thesis starts by framing the concepts of art and aesthetics, then introduces theoretical proposals on relations between cuisine and art. A vision on food representation throughout the centuries provides a background for the presentation of the culinary photography discipline. The study consequently dives into the idea of conceptual cuisine, by introducing and discussing the work of selected contemporary artist-chefs. I furthermore aim to demonstrate how culinary photography can be transformed into artistic photography.

The field research is conducted in the region of Pirkanmaa, Finland, with the collaboration of local raw materials producers. Visual documentation of the field work supports the artistic response, which consists in a food-based artbook proposal titled *Tales of a recipe. Volume I: Pirkanmaa, Suomi-Finland*. This artistic research explores how Finnish raw materials can be transformed and photographically portrayed. Consequently, the research suggests that this act of transformation, starting from choosing the ingredients, can be expression and therefore considered artistic practice.

Key words: artistic research, conceptual cuisine, culinary photography, food-based art

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	FRAMING ART AND AESTHETICS	5
	2.1 Art.....	5
	2.2 Aesthetics.....	6
	2.3 Can cuisine be considered art?.....	6
3	HOW FOOD AND ART ARE RELATED	8
	3.1 From Renaissance to Pablo Picasso	8
	3.2 Culinary photography	12
4	WHEN CUISINE MEETS ART	16
	4.1 The Roca brothers: creative Girona	16
	4.2 Pietro Leemann: vegetarian poetry	19
	4.3 Grant Achatz: the impossible becomes possible.....	21
	4.4 Yann Bernard Lejard: the spoon movement.....	23
	4.5 Gualtiero Marchesi: the avant-avant-garde	26
5	RESEARCH PROJECT	30
	5.1 The city of hamburgers.....	30
	5.2 The starting point.....	31
	5.3 The field trips.....	32
	5.4 Locally nordic	33
6	ARTISTIC RESPONSE.....	40
	6.1 Culinary poetry	40
	6.2 Artistic process	41
	6.3 Artworks	43
7	HOW CAN CUISINE BE PART OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE?.....	49
	REFERENCES.....	51
	LIST OF PICTURES	53

1 INTRODUCTION

I like to think that chefs are the new 'rockstars'. Some of them probably cook no more in their kitchen but, as celebrities, may appear on TV programs or documentaries in between ingredients and audience, as exponent of food culture. Some are ethical activists, do charity, promote rural areas cultures, fight for ecology and against food waste. Some great chefs' 'new job' is to popularize gastronomy. Amongst them, must I say, there are true avant-garde minds, revolutionists and especially, artists. In first person, I take a stand with the modern gastronomy visionary chefs that made a change, with the rule-breakers, with those who elevate their dishes into art masterpieces in order to create a multisensorial artistic experience for their customers.

My personal and professional approach to the gastronomy world started about ten years ago. I still work as a waiter and commis-sommelier, at the moment in the awarded Restaurant Olo, Helsinki. Art, photography and cuisine are my *passioni* (Eng. Passions) deeply rooted in my being. I have seen each of them growing side by side during those years. It was time to blend them in order to create what I am today. To study food, arts and have worked with great chefs, opened my point of view on how to approach the disciplines and consequently, create my very own path in the art field.

With this research, centered on my own food-based art project *Tales of a recipe. Volume I: Pirkanmaa, Suomi-Finland* - a photography art book, I would like to argue that cuisine is an artistic practice, that can be considered a branch of art. This thesis will give a concrete opportunity to the unspoken idea 'cuisine is art' to become real and will explore the research question: how can cuisine be part of the contemporary art scene?

2 FRAMING ART AND AESTHETICS

In order to start inquiring into the research, as a simple reasoning, an analytic view on what art and aesthetics are is a fundamental acknowledgement needed prior to any other possible discussion.

I will not go too deep into the definition of the words due to the complexity of the field: the result would be an endless philosophical battle. An analysis in order to broadly introduce the subjects, is the solution for this purpose. The research shall furthermore introduce and explore another preliminary question: can cuisine be considered art?

2.1 Art

Since centuries man has been giving to the concept of art a great number of definitions. Art can be defined indeed in multiple ways and approaches, as emerged in Adajian's (2018) essay. The results vary according to the selected time, rethorics and philosophers. The more agent are taken into consideration, the more complex the definition becomes (Adajian 2018). So it has happened in history, so it happens in contemporary times. In fact philosophers, artists, historians, academics, chefs, each one would have a different opinion about the definition of art. The word, in the past, was used to define craftsmanship - for example. Nowadays, the term shall be used with more precision, since it has a huge power and it might awake the widest philosophical arguments, it is wise never to forget the past though. What is art and what is not?

A pragmatic, synthetic and clear definition is given by the Oxford Dictionary. An early conception of art is essentially craftsmanship, as above mentioned, along with a special skill or ability. A more modern analysis of the semantics would define art as expression, a creative discipline or the creation of a concept. To further continue through the interpretation of the 'art word', a differentiation shall be taken in consideration: art and fine art. One term and concept, may be a natural consequence and an evolution of the other, like sub-areas of the former subject. It may happen to think that the two words are synonyms but there are conceptual differences. Fine art is defined by the Oxford Dictionary, as a creative process or the expression of an idea in a visual - or not - form, but also as of

intellectual content, beauty and sometimes without practical use. All these interpretations are quite connected to each other, from the past to the present.

2.2 Aesthetics

To provide more than a general definition of the subject matter of aesthetics is immensely difficult. Indeed, it could be said that self-definition has been the major task of modern aesthetics. We are acquainted with an interesting and puzzling realm of experience: the realm of the beautiful, the ugly, the sublime, and the elegant; of taste, criticism, and fine art; and of contemplation, sensuous enjoyment, and charm. (Munro & Scruton 2019)

Since ever, art and aesthetics have been inseparable disciplines. Both, applied and theoretical. One cannot exist in absence of the other. Aesthetics is the philosophical study of beauty and artistic taste. Moreover, it is a science which examines the principles provided by perception or a discipline that investigates all the beautiful emotions giving pleasure. (Sipahi & Yilmaz 2017)

Another fascinating approach to aesthetics takes reason and numbers in consideration. The *sectio aurea* (Eng. Golden section) or *divina proportione* (Eng. Divine proportion) is the mathematic explanation on how proportions affect our understanding of beauty and consequently, classic aesthetics harmony. The Phi number ϕ ($a + b / a = a / b = 1,618\dots$) named after the Greek sculptor Phidias, is the algebrical demonstration of the ratio - the beauty in Western classic art and achitecture. Phi is found from the Parthenon's structure, passing by the Italian Renaissance, arriving in modern times to Mondrian's works. And, if one measures his/her forearm and his/her hand, is easy to guess what is the ratio between the body parts. (Meisner 2012)

2.3 Can cuisine be considered art?

This inquiry shall proceed with the exploration of another question strictly related to its contents: can cuisine be considered art? Results have been found mainly in philosophical studies and artistic practice. In the art field, cusine - and consequently food - has been utilized by artists in different art movements for

specific artistic purposes through the history of art, as arose in Raviv's essay. (Raviv N.d.) But if cuisine can be considered art or not is a dilemma that, as suggested by Perullo (2017), was even questioned by Plato himself. Perullo wrote his nine theses inquiring the question in *Taste of Art*, analyzing in a philosophical series of arguments the case. The emerged answers are blurry. They ponder on differences between art and handicraft, on what is art and what is not, food ephemeral, creativity, experiences, ethics: a loop of theories which is subjected to personal context and interpretation. (Perullo 2017, 23 - 44.)

An applied artistic aspect that shall be considered connected to visuals in cuisine is plating. The art of plating can be merely described as food presentation. An analysis of the creative processes, evolution, history and purposes of plating techniques presented by Deroy, Michel, Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence (2014) shows the complexity and importance of such practice, being food also eaten by the eye and being cuisine a fully creative process itself.

Cuisine is made of visuals but it is also conceptual on certain levels, as next to be analyzed.

As a preliminary conclusion based on this framework, I suggest that art is a deep form of expression of a concept through variable mediums. Art is definitely also a practice brought to perfection with dedication and experience. Art is communication, narrative, beauty, harmony that reaches and shakes feelings creating emotional reactions, like cuisine: the art of food transformation and presentation.

3 HOW FOOD AND ART ARE RELATED

To pursue the inquiry, an upside-down analysis shall be made. Let's consider now food as a subject of art and not as an artwork itself. It is surprising to see how mankind has utilized food as an 'ingredient' for art and how its depiction evolved throughout time: new technologies and society's needs are the core variables of the transmutation.

Food has been largely depicted in the history of art production. We can go incredibly back millenniums ago until the Egyptians hieroglyphs, Greeks and Romans frescos and mosaics. After the dark Middle-Ages the Renaissance blossomed, the grand Baroque developed, then the 18th century with the Age of Enlightenment saw the second revival of Classicism. Then arrives the 19th century's Impressionists movement and the invention of photography that have changed the world. We eventually land to our contemporary times and the digital era. In each and every time period raw materials, food and beverages have been depicted in as many ways as purposes. A grand metamorphosis, surely, has happened over the centuries.

3.1 From Renaissance to Pablo Picasso

The Renaissance, so the rebirth of arts and sciences, has seen its begin and evolution from the Humanism in the 15th century a.D. in its cradle: the wealthy city of Firenze. Italian painters of the period utilized raw materials as an allegory in their artworks and so did many others in the following centuries. Religious symbolism from paganism and Christianity has appeared in paintings with fruits and vegetables such as pomegranates, grapes, apples, gourds as Meagher (2009) wrote. Another author, Liedtke (2003) analyzed indirectly the depiction of food in the late 16th century central-northern European scene. Rich Dutch merchant families, started to order a different content-style of art from artists where raw materials such as fruits and shellfish, wine vessels, flowers, wild catch and game, appeared on the dark-background canvases as subjects. Much more different content might have been also the response to the boredom caused by regular portraiture or religious scenes offered by the art scene at that time.

Food, in this specific case, has been used as a symbolic representation of richness, depicting with exclusive raw materials the wealthy social status of the artists' customers. It was the time when still-life has born. This painting genre indeed set the contemporary culinary photography style, which is part of this thesis photography book project.

The birth of still-life changed radically the food depiction in art. Especially southern European artists, such as the great Italian maestro Michelangelo Merisi, il Caravaggio, started to use observation more and more as a technical tool for their paintings (Picture 1). The strong chiaroscuro marked very much his own revolutionary, studio-photography alike style. His recognizable mastery in the use of light and the incredible realism in his paintings set new standards, creating an independent art movement named after him.



PICTURE 1. *Still life with fruit on a stone ledge* by Il Caravaggio, oil on canvas, 1605-1610

The study of light, opened the way to the artistic movement that, once again, a couple of hundreds of years in the future, after the Realism, would have changed radically the art scene: the Impressionism.

Rule-breakers, criticized and misunderstood at first, the Impressionists were a revolutionary movement born in Paris at the end of the 19th century. They escaped the atelier, concentrating mostly on en-plain-air painting. Fast brush

strokes, flat colours, blurred subjects: the consequence of the will to reproduce, as fast as possible, the light conditions of the very precise moment when the image was captured. Impressionist artists were working like modern photographers.

One of the first Impressionist exponent was Eduard Manet. These words accompany the above mentioned idea, being this thesis also based on photography:

He also started to focus on images of everyday life, such as scenes in cafés, boudoirs, and out in the street. His anti-academic style and quintessentially modern subject matter soon attracted the attention of artists on the fringes and influenced a new type of painting that would diverge from the standards of the official salon. (Wolf 2012)

Due to the nature of the movement: they captured streets, everyday-life scenes, buildings and landscapes. Yet, many beautiful still-life have been painted in this period. The Impressionists opened the way to a great artist well-known for his food-based still-life paintings.

Paul Cézanne's painting style is definitely an evolution of the Dutch school in term of composition and subjects, with a touch of Impressionist taste in matter of painting technique. The French painter was sensitive to common objects - and raw materials poetry. In his oeuvres apples, pears, onions and other fruits, along with jars and linens, has a prime role in matter of visual content. The study of volumes, colours, spaces construction, layouts and once again light, defined what nowadays is a strongly recognizable style that immediately identifies the artist among others. Perspectives in his paintings were used in a new, purposely wrong way. On the same image multiple points of view appear, breaking rules and creating a new experience of perception.

Cézanne is essentially the artist that I like to define as the door to another great art movement also known for its still-life works: the Cubism.

A truly revolutionary art movement of the 20th century, the Cubism was founded by George Braque and one of the century's absolute protagonist of its art: Pablo Picasso. The term Cubism was kept after a Matisse's critique on its style, de-

scribing it like a bunch of cubes. The artistic movement has strong recognizable features in terms of form: many perspectives are united on a single image, creating a unique feeling of perception and style.

Along with a wide range of subjects, food had definitely a great importance in Cubism's composition and contents. Many are the still-life painted by the masters during the period and its sub-periods. The solid volumes of raw materials seems to marry perfectly the Cubist approach on a subject - or multiple ones - just like in Cézanne's works. This is a valid reason why Cubists have studied food-based still-lives, braking every rules of the rational perception depicted in the previous centuries (Picture 2).



PICTURE 2. *Nature morte au citron et à la crouche* by Pablo Picasso, oil on canvas, 1936

Food and raw materials had an important role throughout the centuries in terms of composition, symbolic meaning, narrative and surely, inspiration of many masters being subjects for their art. Not yet artworks themselves, though.

3.2 Culinary photography

Photography is a medium with infinite applications and nuances of expression. It has born as a as-faithful-as-possible reality reproduction via light, a lense and a light sensitive material. It can definetely also be used for non-figurative abstract purposes, leaving quite much freedom of expression with the three variable elements of wich is made of: exposure (time), aperture (f), light sensitivity. Yet a well defined and precise image is always highly appreciated in all photography's applications. Definetely it was - and it is - a valid competitor of painting as well, as the nature of the medium is to reproduce reality or create a staged image in terms of composition and subjects. To be remebered is that the first photography was only in black and white.

In the early days of photography a very long exposure time was needed, that is why very common subjects were portraits, landscapes and still-life. Steady elements allowed the light sensitive material to react with light and capture the image without being too blurry. The first cameras were definetely not-so-easy-to-carry being a large format. Then another important revolution after the birth of the medium, is when the first vertical 35mm film appeared to the world, around the year 1895. It was meant though, for the cinema. The Lumière brothers were about to change the world after Thomas Edison's kinetograph. Only after a while in the 20th century the horizontal 35mm appeared along with colour films, the reflex system and all the other technical equipment still in use nowadays, defining our vision on photography. (Rovere 2020)

Examples with food as a subject are found, after the painting-based visual art, obviously in photography. Raw-materials-based still lifes are photographed and a new phenomena changed mankind's life: advertisment. With the economical growth, consumerism and mass production, advertisment took part of everyday life and the absolute example is TV. In a more image-based advertisment, photography had a crucial role side by side with the more classic illustration. An evolution of imagery has happened from the 20's to the 60's, and even more from the 80's to the new millennium. An excellent local exponent of commercial still-life photography is the high-end studio Koski-Syväri, located in Helsinki (www.koskisyvari.com).

A great example of where food imagery and culture are protagonist is a particular branch of literature: cookbooks. Through the centuries cookbooks have been written in order to group recipes and techniques of food execution. Recipes have been written since Mesopotamia's times. But the very first Western world's manual, or better a set of recipes, has been written by a Roman gourmand and luxury lover: Marcus Gavius Apicius. Many of the greatest chefs in history felt the urge of sharing their knowledge, creativity and expression through this section of literature. The legends Marie-Antoine Carême and Auguste Escoffier, as an example, wrote some of the most revolutionary cookbooks in modern history: *L'Art de la Cuisine Française* and *Guide Culinaire*. They are the fathers of the haute-cuisine in other words. To be reminded, another legend that deserves a mention: Fernand Point and his oeuvre *Ma gastronomie*. He truly cared on the spreading and free passing-on of food culture: "It is the duty of a good chef, to hand down to the next generation all that he has learned and experienced" (Andrews 2015).

An endless list could be written about cookbooks published until nowadays. As everything else, also cookbooks have faced an evolution through time. From the greatest classics of the beginning of the century - and before, to the other classics of the 60's, 70's and 80's, where 'tv chefs' started to appear on medias. However, it is only more recently that some cookbooks evolved into art books. Especially nowadays, when chefs write their own book related to their restaurant or focusing on their own work and interpretation of cuisine. Breathtaking photographs, layouts, philosophical texts and also recipes now appear into food - and not only - enthusiasts' bookcase.

In modern cookbooks - and in other dedicated publications - illustrations have been supplanted by photographs. It is the birth of another specialized category of the medium: culinary photography. Culinary photography falls into the category of still-life due to its nature that depicts an inanimated subject. I started approaching this specific discipline in 2016. After that, I continued to photograph dishes in the restaurant I previously worked for. A classic example of a culinary photography shot is presented in picture 3.



PICTURE 3. Culinary photography shot by Nicolò Arnoldi

Culinary photography is omnipresent in our daily-life: social media, specialized web pages, advertisement boards at our bus stop, megazines and so on. Photography had a crucial role into stepping-up cookbooks' quality of visual contents and aesthetics. Nowadays there are professional photographers only specializing in culinary photography, either with commercial and/or artistic purposes.

Though, only very few culinary photography works are found in art related environments such as art museums, galleries, exhibitions. I have seen Dutch still-life paintings. I have seen contemporary art photographs with 'food' elements in the composition but not a single one depicting - or portraying - an ashtonishing dish. Why? This triggered something extremely deep in me. I could almost define that feeling anger, considering my passion for cuisine and art. I had to do something. I have a problem now. How food becomes art? How to elevate culinary photography into fine art?

I started the inquiry process with my participation to the collective exhibition *Hot futures* held in the art gallery Himmelblau, Tampere, in May 2018. I presented *Taste*, an early stage of this thesis' final food-based art project.

Culinary photography portraying my own culinary works was in fact brought into an art related environment (Picture 4).



PICTURE 4. *Taste* by Nicolò Arnoldi

In the following chapters the research continues by approaching in a more detailed view the subject analyzing some chef's creations. And of course, my very own one.

4 WHEN CUISINE MEETS ART

Cuisine needs capabilities, techniques and taste, along with dedication and research. Research of taste and harmony. To create something new one has to dare, sometimes to forget rules, to be curious and to master knowledge. It is a matter of balance and unbalance, it is a matter of creative expression. Just like art.

The presented chef-artists were selected to support my inquiry with an analysis via visual and conceptual material. I have been actively following and studying with respectful admiration their work since years. Their practice has been a great inspiration and motivation. In some of the cases I even experienced in first person their creations, their oeuvres.

4.1 The Roca brothers: creative Girona

Run by three brothers with three distinct but equal talents – Joan, the chef; Josep, the sommelier; and Jordi, the pastry chef – it is not only a restaurant serving world-class food and wine alongside exceptional service, but a place so welcoming that it might as well be the Rocas' living room. (The World's 50 Best Restaurants n.d.)

The restaurant El Cellar de Can Roca is located in Girona, a small city in northern Catalunya, Spain. It has been awarded two times the best restaurant in the world by the World's 50 Best Restaurants organization. The legendary gastronomic guide Michelin has rated the restaurant with its three stars in 2009, the existing top-level. In October 2019 I experienced a dinner at the restaurant and collected data for this study. A Catalan cuisine that has travelled a lot, opening its mind: references from the four corners of the world appeared throughout the menù, titled *Festival*. But roots are strong. Proud. The poetry is inspired by the land and memories. This is why those three brothers were selected for this study. They represent a land, they want to. They balance the old and the new. They tell stories about their lives through their dishes. Breathtaking supports - plates and not only - were used to present and serve food, transforming and contextualizing the experience towards a true artistic practice.

Green olive ice cream and black olive tempura (Picture 5) is a snack-dish presented in the first quarter of the menu. It consists in a olive tree bonsai on which are hanged 'olives' to be picked and eaten. This serving is an interactive installation where the audience is brought to perform by eat 'fake' olives from their natural environment, the protagonist of the work in this very case. It is a transformation of the matter started from the matter, evolved and re-assembled to the original shape and environment. A playful mind game that utilizes a base ingredient of the mediterranean diet.

Jordi Roca is the youngest brother and the 'researcher' of the family. His playful vision on pâtisserie, along with science-oriented avantgarde techniques and an incredible imagination, created a true visionary character in the pastry history.

Petrichor (Picture 6) literally takes the mind away. Scientifically speaking, petrichor is the earthy scent produced when rain falls on dry soil. Not a better title could be given. It is composed of soil flavoured water, pine syrup ice cream, carob cookie, fir dust and cocoa biscuits. Jordi Roca arrived to a such an high level of thought - and romanticism, that he distilled the autumnal top soil collected from the woods where he goes to pick up mushrooms.

Very often food stimulates memory. Memory plays the artistic role in the understanding of this work: it leads one's mind. It is the medium for a unique feeling of separation and perception. *Petrichor* physically splits the mind from the body. It brings one to the place where it wants to with extreme precision, depending of one's memory. It is intimate. It brought me to a late November Sunday spent with my bike around my village area. The wood, the river, the fallen leaves. Smell, flavours and visuals create a full-sensory experience. Time moves with the mind through a journey that ends in another bite. It is temporary, being a limited amount of food. One returns whole, of body and mind, once the dish is finished. But the experience will remain in one's memory, creating a circle of connected memories.

Aesthetically the work is carefully executed: all the elements of the dessert visually recreates soil and dry leaves, slowly crunching, melting and releasing pure emotions. The colour palette is composed of only brown tones, referring to the

natural elements by which the work is inspired. Not to be forgotten is the plate in which food is served, the artist's 'canvas': a full-white ceramic neat reproduction of a tree log that contextualize and elevate the work and its narrative, completing the multisensorial experience.



PICTURE 5. *Green olive ice cream and black olive tempura*. El Celler de Can Roca. By Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 6. *Petrichor*. El Celler de Can Roca. By Nicolò Arnoldi

4.2 Pietro Leemann: vegetarian poetry

Swiss chef Pietro Leemann is the example of how cuisine can meet philosophy and art. After years spent in China, Japan and India studying philosophies and cuisines, he brought all his precious knowledge to Italy. Back in 1988, it was not that common in the land of lasagne. His cuisine is only vegetarian or vegan. His restaurant Joia, opened in 1989 and located in Milano, is the only vegetarian restaurant in Europe to retain a Michelin star since 1996.

Leemann's vegetarian haute-cuisine is a radical, powerful statement. He broke barriers with curiosity, culture and courage. He set a new vision of cuisine.

One of his books, *Joia. I nuovi confini della cucina vegetariana* (Eng. Joia. The new borders of vegetarian cuisine), is the cookbook that changed my own vision on how cuisine can be an artistic practice in terms of concepts and visuals. It was the spark that triggered what I have been doing most recently in my artistic practice. I experienced the *Zenith* menù in Joia, in February 2020, also as a data collection for this study.

Pietro Leemann was selected for this study because of his storytelling. Tales not told by words but by his conceptual cuisine language. The source of his sto-

ries are books, encounters, travels, anecdotes, spiritual disciplines, memories. Every story-dish has a very well thought title that supports the work concept, like in the majority of artworks. His studied plating completes every story narrative, melting the tangible with the untangible.

Sotto una coltre colorata (Eng. Under a coloured blanket), is one of the most iconic signature dishes of Joia (Picture 7). It is the story of the chef wandering around his Swiss Alps' woods: lights and shadows, scents and sounds. It interacts with seasons, varying the ingredients and colours depending on the time of the year in which is prepared. A dialogue between nature and the chef's mind carried in a white plate. Around thirty ingredients, everyone with its own preparation, leave every single bite a surprise - a unique discover. A sense of unknown reaches the mind: ingredients lay hidden under milk clouds, the blanket, finished by a mimimalistic touch of petals. Lightness, airy elegance and in the same time a very well thought disorder. Unexpectation and wonder, just like a journey in a new country, in a new area of the land.



PICTURE 7. *Sotto una coltre colorata* by Pietro Leemann

4.3 Grant Achatz: the impossible becomes possible

Grant Achatz is an American chef, co-owner of the restaurant Alinea in Chicago, Illinois. Awarded multiple times the best restaurant in U.S.A., it retains three Michelin stars since 2011. Alinea is one of the world's Meccas of modernist cuisine: a revolutionary movement that can be described synthetically as a strict collaboration between science and cuisine. Grant Achatz grew up in his family diner, eventually worked for Thomas Keller and staged in the most innovative restaurant of the world at that time: the legendary Adrià brothers' El Bulli, heart and brain of modernist cuisine. In 2008 he was diagnosed stage IV tongue cancer. Signed into an experimental treatment, luckily healed but lost his sense of taste – which eventually returned. He kept on cooking and creating. He used his mind even to taste.

"The act of eating engages all the senses as well as the mind. Preparing and serving food could therefore be the most complex and comprehensive of the performing arts" (Adrià, Blumenthal, Keller & McGee 2006) are words that suggest Achatz's idea of cuisine. He established his own cuisine and related service. Innovation by research, thought, creativity and definitely, a sprinkle of madness. An experience in Alinea cannot be only described as a dinner. It offers more: interactive installations, even action painting. That is the reason why Grant Achatz was selected for this study. A true avant-garde figure that combines different fields related in this case to cuisine, giving birth to an art performance.

Early on in Alinea, we had this realization that there's other disciplines that we can draw on for inspiration. We would go to art galleries and you would see these giant-scale pieces of art. And I would always say -why can't we plate on that?-. It frustrated me that, as a chef, we were limited to a scale that was determined by plate manufacturers. Why not a tablecloth that we can eat off of? Why do you have to eat with a fork or a spoon? And why it has to be served on a plate or in a bowl? Why can't we come up with something new? Rules. There are no rules. Do whatever you want. (Gelb, Nishimura, Del Deo, Weaver, McGinn, Fried & McGinn 2016)

These are Grant Achatz's words in the opening moments of the documentary *Chef's Table*. Words that are the essence of his iconic 'dish' that has changed the view on eating and plating performances, naturally connected to each other. Achatz broke the most natural rule to eat from a plate. The ingredients of this dessert are 'plated' via an action painting performance in front of the audience, directly on top of the table. The canvas is a special tablecloth and the paint is replaced by the dessert's components. (Picture 8; Picture 9)

The impossible becomes possible in *Alinea*: an edible floating sugar balloon, a waiter spray-painting a dish in front of the audience, a clear pumpkin pie, a dish on a pillow inflated with aromatic air releasing it slowly because of gravity. Some ingredients for a serving might be camouflaged on top of people's heads. To break rules and innovate are a crucial features for the chef's cuisine identity. Everything in *Alinea* is thought to shock, trick and mesmerize the audience, conceptually and aesthetically.



PICTURE 8. Chef Grant Achatz and sous-chef Mike Bagale performing *Alinea*'s signature table plating



PICTURE 9. Final result of Alinea's table plating performance

4.4 Yann Bernard Lejard: the spoon movement

Yann Bernard Lejard is very active in food medias - mainly on Instagram, always creating new imagery in order to show his creations to the audience. He was born in Paris and raised in Montpellier, France. He worked around Europe in top-level restaurants and hotels, including for the legendary chef Alain Ducasse. Since 2014 he is executive chef and creative leader in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel's restaurant Plums, in Manama, Bahrain. Recently, a second restaurant project was opened in the same establishment under the program La Table Krug, focusing even more on Lejard's 'cuisine d'auteur'.

He defines himself more than a chef, an artist. (Andriquetto 2017)

The artist-chef that offers top-level cuisine is gifted with a strong identity in his plating and dressage. His works are marked by an inimitable signature style. I reckon that he has a past in graffiti art. A strong influence from painting applied to plating, brought Yann Bernard Lejard to be selected for this study. Yann Bernard Lejard works aesthetics are defined by a bold, graphical, dynamic, pictorial use of sauces and unusual ingredients position on the plate. He always improvises the composition, but the recipe is well planned and executed. His works

are often supported by titles, completing its conceptual understanding. The plates used for his works are almost always plain white or black, a smart solution that highlights power of colours and movements. Volumes marry the powerful colourfields and curves in an astonishing relation of balance and elegance, leaving light empty areas. All with a rock 'n' roll touch. His main tool is a spoon. As a brush, his spoon's movements draw curves, lines, drips, splashes, colourfields creating a unique visual expression (Picture 10). Other creatively used interesting plating tools are spatulas and syringes. A fundamental element is his mastery in sauces. He brought the dressings to resemble acrylic paint in terms of texture and colour saturation, making them protagonists of his works. Knowledge and passion, once again are the key for creativity.

Along with a 'classic' approach on plating, later in his career the artist-chef also created his very own 'board plating by YBL' artistic concept (YBL is his stage name) (Picture 11).

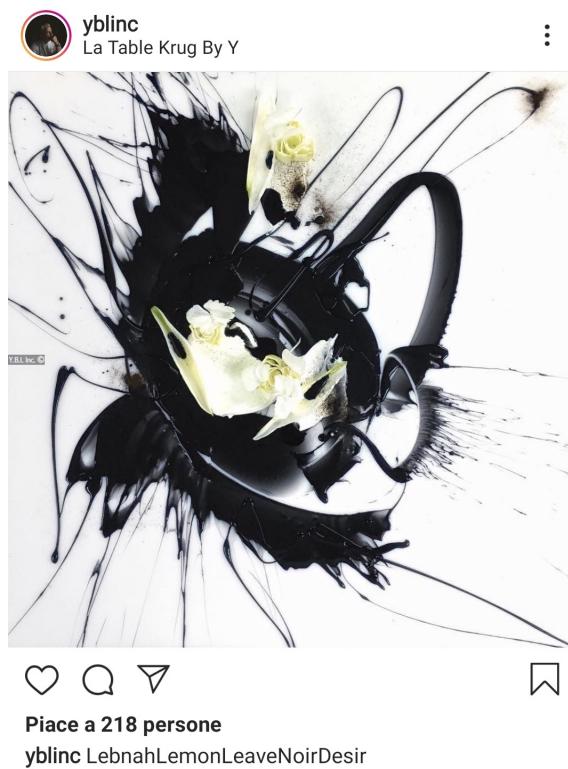
Lejard breaks the limits of the plate dimension by continuing the plating composition outside the borders, on the board where the plate is layed - or not. Once ready, the work is photographed. The kitchen is his atelier. Though, he also performs in organized events around the world by plating in a painting performance his works. A board is placed horizontally in a environment in order to create the canvas, like a giant scale plate, where the audience will eat from. He splashes sauces around, throws flower petals, places quenelles, creating a true artistic performance supported by music and lights. His 'board plating' and 'plated' works are always photographed from the top point of view. If printed and hung, they would incredibly resemble paintings from the American post-Expressionism movement, in his very case.

I had this idea along my own creative process and the result can be seen in picture 4. It is an example of another use of food and culinary photography.

Yann Bernard Lejard's works are concrete examples that cuisine can meet -and became art in a physical way. He is a figure that evolved with time: from cook to multi-disciplinary artist, creating trends, signature visuals and performances. A food-based artist with a rockstar ego.



PICTURE 10. *Orange Eggs* by Yann Bernard Lejard



PICTURE 11. *LebnahLemonLeaveNoirDesir* by Yann Bernard Lejard

4.5 Gualtiero Marchesi: the avant-avant-garde

Gualtiero Marchesi (1930 – 2017), the Maestro, is the most legendary Italian chef ever existed. Even if he passed away, his immense cultural legacy lives on. Born in Milano and grew up in his family's hotel, he opened his curious mind especially towards France and Japan. His restaurants are history. He was awarded a Michelin star in 1978 and he was the very first chef in the world to be awarded three Michelin stars outside France, in 1985. A seven-decades-long career started the greatest revolution in the Italian culinary culture: he is the man who invented the Italian nouvelle cuisine. From rustic and generous to fine and most elegant. During his life Marchesi has won an astonishing number of awards, prizes, titles and a *Honoris Causa* degree in Gastronomic Sciences. Even more: Knight of the Italian Republic in 1986 and honoured Knight of the Order of Arts and Literature in France in 1990. (Gualtiero Marchesi n.d.)

The Maestro was not only a great chef, he was a man of culture. The luminary Gualtiero Marchesi's idea of cuisine is as avant-garde in the current year 2020 as it was in the 80's, 90', 00's. An 'avant-avant-garde' mind. He blended cuisine, arts and culture.

Like an artist, he focused on the shape and contents when creating his works, never leaving beauty behind. He respected the matter and its nature. Marchesi's cuisine groundworks are cleanness, purity, synthesis. An essential cuisine in terms of tastes and aesthetics but with way much more behind it. Concepts of ideas once again, are the key to unlock the interpretation of his works. Studied titles, plating, serving vessels: everything matters, everything has a specific reason. May seem similar as shown in the previously analyzed chefs, but he made it forty years before anyone else. *La cucina totale* (Eng. the total-cuisine), as he self-defined his own style. A holistic cuisine, I say. This is why Gualtiero Marchesi was selected for this study. The Maestro is his epithet for a good reason. He was the artist of food.

Gualtiero Marchesi was an art enthusiast. He attended cultural circles and established long friendships with the great art historian Gillo Dorfles - a regular customer of his restaurant in Milano - and contemporary Italian artists such as

Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Giorgio Albertini and Alberto Burri. In fact, many of Marchesi's works were inspired by artists and artworks.

Opere/works is the last of many published books of Gualtiero Marchesi. Published in 2016, just one year before he passed away, the book is the portrait of his career and the following words are the synthesis of his thought:

This is a book about the aesthetics of culinary dishes and not about techniques or recipes. A book that relies on images, composition, and ideas. Behind each of these dishes, there is always a thought and an inspiration connected with an object, a book, a meeting, a situation where the freedom of spirit does not preclude having fun. The idea and the image correspond to the concept that form is matter, that pure beauty is genuinely good. - - Cuisine like music is made of composers and performers. The one hundred and thirty-three dishes that I present are the collection of a lifetime where I have always tried to go beyond satisfying the appetite, interest, or presentation. - - My love of the arts and friendship with many artists have guided and relieved the hard daily work as a chef, succeeding perhaps, this profession into a language that can be compared to other artistic expressions. (Marchesi & Dal Falco 2016, 6.)

Following a few iconic works that show his creative identity. A few of hundreds culinary masterpieces created during his incredible career.

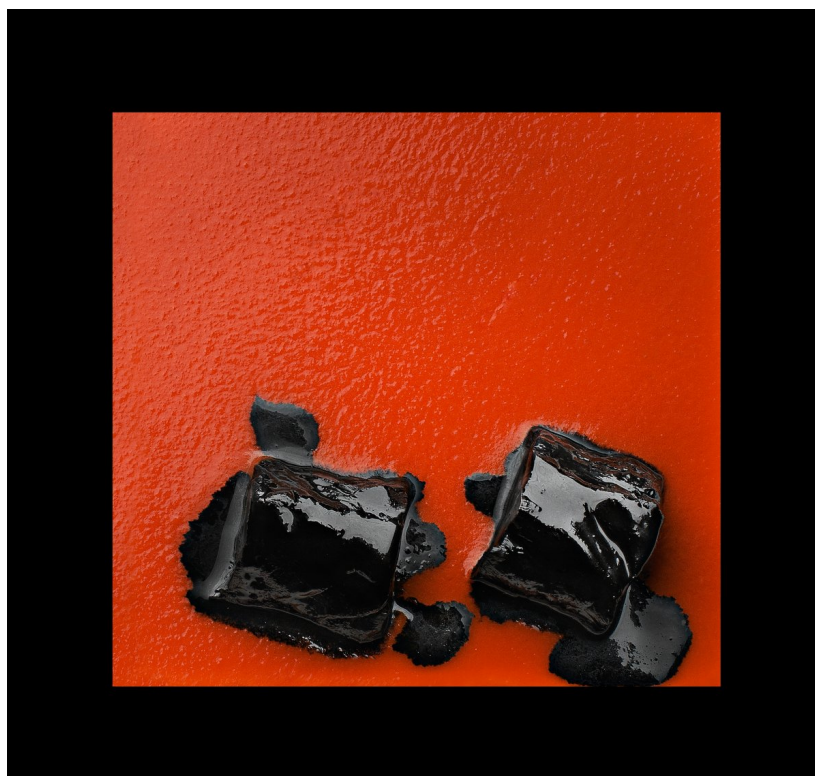
Seppia al nero (Eng. Squid in its black), presented in 1983, is the essence of truth. The essence of the shape. Bichromism at its purest stage. The maximum form of respect for the matter: in this case a squid, its ink and butter to create the black silk. The synthesis of shape and taste in a dish. Marchesi cleaned up all the unnecessary to elevate the one and only protagonist: the ingredient. (Picture 12)

Il rosso e il nero (Eng. the red and the black), presented in 2011, is a tribute to Lucio Fontana, Italian contemporary painter who invented the Spatialism movement and exponent of the Informal Abstract Expressionism. He is best known for his iconic cut or punctured monochromatic canvas series *Buchi* (Eng.

holes) and *Tagli* (Eng. cuts). The artist researches a relation between the white colour of the matter and the black colour of the void, bringing the audience to look inside and beyond the artwork, not the surface only (Dorfles & Vettese 2011, 340-342.). In this work Marchesi, like Fontana, started from a sculptural approach to a bidimensional space. The red flat color field is broken by the black presence, like holes in Fontana's artworks: the red is a light tomato-based gazpacho, the black is a squid ink glaze and then, then the unexpected: white colour appears after a cut, showing the immaculate monkfish meat. Another playful feature of this work is that the elements of the dish have different temperatures. Space and surfaces dimensions interact with the gesture of a cut: an art-based dish, food as art. (Picture 13)



PICTURE 12. *Seppia al nero* by Gualtiero Marchesi



PICTURE 13. *Il rosso e il nero* by Gualtiero Marchesi

5 RESEARCH PROJECT

Tales of a recipe. Volume I: Pirkanmaa, Suomi-Finland project is the result of three and a half years of research in the Pirkanmaa region, including networking, field trips, photo-documentary, artistic exploration, thoughts and ideas. This art-based research gave birth to a food-based photography artbook, which is divided in two sections: *Locally nordic* as the field research, and *Culinary poetry* as the artistic research. Photography and cuisine were my mediums. The project is an act of activism. It is a tribute to a land. It is respect. It is expression. It is my response to my research question: how can cuisine be part of the contemporary art scene? It is also my very own contribution to support Finnish cuisine identity showing the great potential of this land, nationally and internationally, focusing on its regions. Finland is divided in nineteen regions and Pirkanmaa was selected as first for the reason that I have been living, studying and working in its main city, the city of Tampere, for four and a half years.

I must add that it is my will to extend the project to other Finnish regions and apply the concept internationally, focusing on European countries first.

5.1 The city of hamburgers

I come from a country in which food is sacred, Italy. Finland is not the first country that one associates with gastronomy, even though Finnish cuisine is a great mixture of influences and I discovered it has a lot to offer.

At my first arrival as a student in Tampere in 2014, as always, the first question was: what does people traditionally eat here? I struggled years to obtain answers in order to exit the wrong stereotypes of Finnish food culture. The process of discovery continues. I still ask to my Finnish friends many questions. I always ask to new people, such as colleagues, what they traditionally eat in their own region of Finland. Sometimes, unfortunately, they do not know much about their own food culture, they have no precise answers. It shocks me every-time. In fact, there is people that consider food as nourishment only. I strongly disagree. As seen in chapter 4, food is nourishment and much more. I also like to think that food is one of the groundworks elements that create a culture, a nation.

Tampere was described to me by locals as the city of hamburgers, hot chicken wings and mustamakkara - a delicious local blood sausage. I cannot argue that. To my eyes hamburgers and hot wings are not considerable Finnish traditional food because they are obviously imported from the U.S. food culture. I always get furious when I hear it. Though, mustamakkara is a prime example of Tampere city traditional food. And I am always proud to introduce it to foreigners or my fellows Italians.

Tradition, origins, roots. I realized that, in Finland, there has been a loss of those elements that are the backbone of a culinary identity. I believe that Finnish traditional food is often underrated. There is not a single restaurant in Tampere city only focusing on its traditional food. Something full of stories, history, without French sauces or canned jalapeños. Something real and well executed in respect of traditions.

Why in Tampere and in Finland, the majority of restaurants and pubs' food offer is based on foreign cuisines or on Finnish traditional food but highly contaminated with other cultures? Why is it close to impossible to order local rye bread topped with a local cold-smoked pike? Why though, I can order effortlessly curry, sushi, pizza or a burrito? It does not make any sense to me. Only recently Finland is awakening in terms of food identity and pride, stimulated by the birth of the 'new nordic cuisine' movement.

The other core of my project was to find a way to re-connect people to the land, to their authentic food culture, their ingredients. To support local producers, their hard work and its results.

5.2 The starting point

In 2017 I contacted chef Ilkka Isotalo, co-owner of Ravintola C in Tampere. It is known between sector's professionals and customers that the sources of the ingredients he transforms are meticulously selected. He listened with curiosity when I explained him the idea I had: to depict Pirkanmaa region's raw materials in my very own way, for my cause. Chef Isotalo shared with me his restaurant

suppliers contacts: farmers, his trusted fisherman, hunters, dairy farms, cheese artisans, cattle farms - only organic and ethical.

Countless e-mails have been sent multiple times and during different times of the year, in order to introduce myself and my project to the given contacts and asking for a collaboration.

Unfortunately, not all the producers or sector professionals were interested or willing to collaborate for the project's development. English and Finnish languages were both used in order to approach the producers, making them at ease. I researched collaborators also utilizing an interactive local food producers search engine also implemented by Ahlman School of Agriculture in Tampere: Parastapöytään Pirkanmaa. A great program/website with a similar aim of my own project: to connect people with high quality raw materials and local producers of the Pirkanmaa region.

The slow rhythms of responses delayed the project's schedule in terms of production and data collection. Anyway, after months and seasons, I collected quite much visual and cultural material in order to be transformed into the book's contents.

5.3 The field trips

After an agreement with the producers, I proceeded with visiting the facilities and/or experiencing a working day. To meet them in person was quite of an experience. Great persons and personalities emerged after the ice was broken. We introduced each other, had coffee. They asked me: "Why on earth you moved to Finland from Italy, such a beautiful country?" I always answered: "I love this country" and told my story. They listened curiously when I started to frame the project's identity, mentioning words like 'documentary', 'art', 'photography'. They were probably asking themselves the reason why I was doing this project. Taking photos of a cabbage? Why?

I have visited two biodynamic farms with a vegetable garden, grain fields, orchard, cattle farming. More precisely the Finnish indigenous sheep and cow breed Kyyttö and Limousine cow. Also, a wild boar farm, Finland's first organic berries farm, an excellent brewery, a berry-wine winery, an artisanal cheese factory owned and run by a Swiss cheese master. And of course, last but not

least, I have been off fishing with one of the very few commercial licensed fishermen of the Pirkanmaa region. Fishing in Pirkanmaa offers amazing variety of sweet-water fish species that are not in any danger. Hunting is regulated and sustainable, once again not putting in danger any animal species.

An important acknowledgment that must be mentioned is that many important Finnish raw materials are found only in nature, growing and living wildly: varieties of berries, forest mushrooms, herbs, trees, fishes and animals. Nature gifted Finland with true generosity.

During the field research forty-nine different subjects were portrayed in their natural environment. All the living creatures, from a potato to a cow, are treated with the highest ethical standards in the visited facilities. And I also obeyed to those standards while being with them and while transforming them.

5.4 Locally nordic

The field work connected me with people, land and ingredients. It was the inspiration for my expression. To drive around the region was a sort of meditation, a spiritual journey in solitude. Me in the old university's Volkswagen Transporter van. The van was like a spiritual entity that brought me into the wild, into culture, into people's lives, into the ingredients.

During the visits I portrayed photographically the raw material production, growth and identity. I connected myself with the ingredient in its own natural environment. I cuddled sheeps, stepped on their manure, touched the grass they eat. I smelled the scent of soil on top of freshly picked beetroots, the forest in autumn covered with wild mushrooms. I ate the first shoots from a birch, their flavour is something magic, sweet, delicate, aromatic. I saw the wild caught perch on a fishing boat that until a few minutes in advance was moving fast like a rocket on the surface of lake Pyhäjärvi. I even ate fresh mozzarella hand made before my eyes - in Finland. I studied the environment, saw its colours, seasons, the circle of its life, read the poetry written by the nature.

All of it has been documented and reported on *Locally nordic*, the documentary photography section of *Tales of a recipe*. I experienced the origins of raw mate-

rials. It was the most authentic way in order to understand. I explored with all my senses. It was the most genuine form of research and inspiration for the second book's section: *Culinary poetry*.

Documentary photography is something that has always awakened my interest. I believed that this use of the medium was the best method to document and portray my field research. To contextualize it and to introduce it with visual narratives. The narrative behind a photo often is worth a thousands words. It is a synthesis of a story in a shot.

Growing up and experimenting other photographic styles, I found myself fascinated by geometries, minimalism, rythms, order and disorder. I like to work with huge apertures, depth of field, contrasts, edgy photo cuts. The eye evolved and so did the composition. In *Locally nordic*, photos have been edited as less as possible, following my photography philosophy. I like to leave the shot as natural as possible, to its original shape and expression. Some particular light conditions brought me to edit the image, fixing aperture, brightness and contrast. Sometimes image cropping was needed for the book pages' layout, another medium of visual expression, connected to my aesthetic taste and image composition.

The *Locally Nordic* essence is next reported as a visual synthesis of the long field work. (Picture 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23)



PICTURE 14. Aronia berries, Henkireikä farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 15. Red cabbages, Kurjentila farm and eco-village, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 16. Fishing on lake Pyhäjärvi, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 17. Rye field, Rekola farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 18. Vilho cheese, Herkkujuustola cheese factory, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 19. Finnish sheeps at pasture, Kurjentila Farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 20. Birch tree log in Lukonmäki, Tampere city, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 21. Red onions, Rekola farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 22. Kales, Kurjentila farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi



PICTURE 23. Chicken and a rooster, Kurjentila farm, by Nicolò Arnoldi

6 ARTISTIC RESPONSE

Art is expression. Photography is expression. As analyzed in chapter 4, cuisine as well is expression. *Locally nordic*, as the field work, set the grounds of *Culinary poetry*, the food-based art section of *Tales of a recipe*. *Culinary poetry* is what I define more specifically as my artistic product of this study. It is my response to the research question.

6.1 Culinary poetry

Culinary poetry is a series of photographic portraiture of specifically designed recipes for the *Tales of a recipe* project. The field work allowed me to connect with the physical essence of a recipe: the ingredients. Furthermore, it allowed me to connect with another intangible ingredient: inspiration. Inspiration as the roots, imagination as the body, ideas as branches, results as fruits: the structure of the giant tree called artwork. Every single detail of the field research can be labelled as part of the inspiration for the expressive content. Another element that supports expression is knowledge. In my specific case, the one regarding culinary world and the photography medium.

This book section is an exploration and demonstration of how raw materials, sourced in the region of Pirkanmaa, can be transformed first in a recipe and then, into visual art. In this case, cuisine is my medium of expression and photography is my medium of representation. Together combined the two disciplines created a new way of use of the 'ordinary' culinary photography. I believe an elevation has happened: culinary to art photography. I like to describe the results as food-based paintings. Not literally made with paint nor literally painted on a canvas. I found my own alternative: ingredients are my paint and the board is my canvas. The photograph becomes the painting. I decided not to use any plate in the recipe plating in order to leave more freedom of movement and composition.

Culinary poetry is structured on my idea of a tasting menu. An eleven-course menu, precisely. It shows the interpretation of the ingredients' nature, personality, taste, identity, use. The recipes ideas evolved with time, many modifications

were applied through seasons in terms of tastes combination, plating visuals, ingredients selection. Every recipe is titled and connected to a complementary text that guides into the understanding of the culinary concept. Like a tale - a visual narrative. Allegories, thoughts, artistic movements, landscapes, natural phenomenas are the sources of the works' ideas. Food is taste. Taste is a result of imagination and research. To combine flavours and create a whole harmony between them is another face of expression and I like to consider it a form of art.

I depicted my recipes creating photographic works, my artworks. I like to think that one shot is composed of multiple layers: it is a vertical compression of tangible and intangible. A recipe, its visuals, its concept, its story, its depiction. The entities generate a whole new image, the final new layer: the culinary poetry. It is not 'just' food. It is deeper, it is conceptual cuisine: an artistic practice.

6.2 Artistic process

I spent months taking notes of culinary ideas, sketching visuals, analyzed flavour combinations, researched cooking techniques as part of the artistic research. Then I proceeded with the artworks' creation process. The greater amount of the ingredients used in the recipes were purchased in Tampere City Market Hall, known as Kauppahalli, the city's iconic indoor market. I selected this environment because it is one of the few spaces in which stands sell all-year-around raw materials from the Pirkanmaa region. I also spent hours talking with the fish stand owner, talking about fishes and explaining what I was creating. He gave me his total approval, confirming some of my theories regarding Finnish food identity. I also sourced ingredients from another market, held on Saturdays in Tammelantori square, the old working class neighborhood near the city centre. It is very common to find open-air markets during spring and summer around Finnish cities. It is the best way to find and purchase locally sourced vegetables, fruits, wild berries and wild mushrooms. One of the farmers I visited during the field work, the Rekola farm gardener, keeps a stand in this specific market selling his top-quality vegetables. The best beetroots I have ever had. Not to be forgotten, nature offered me wild ingredients used in the recipes such as herbs, flowers, wild berries, tree shoots and fish.

At the time, in 2018, I was working in Hella ja Huone restaurant in Tampere. My dearest friend and restaurant's owner chef Ilmari Saarikoski gave me the possibility to use his prep-kitchen in order to experiment the possible dishes, to be afterward photographed.

I set up a small photo-studio in his office, next to the prep-kitchen. Technically speaking, I used simple and effective equipment: a white softbox tent, and two led spotlights. The softbox was layed on the floor with one spotlight placed on the right side at around 30cm of height and the other on the left side with a maximum height of 10cm. I needed an extremely bright space in order to spread evenly the light into the tent's volume, avoiding strong shadows on the subjects. In order to highlight the ingredients' colours, a cold and neutral coloured light was used. As a canvas - or plating support, I utilized two medium density fibre-board (MDF) boards of around 90x70cm size covered with an adhesive plastic wrap: the first glossy white and the second matte black.

Once the recipe idea was defined, I proceeded with the execution: mise-en-place and finalizing the cooking. Then the actual visual composition: the plating - or the 'painting'. I both used random and very precisely studied movements and ingredients positions. The pursuit of balance, contrasts and expression started. I realized how different the results may vary from a hand-drawn sketch and the reality. I definitely understood even more that plating was just like the painting process. In some cases I tried several times before reaching the composition that I considered final. It was a creative process that I enjoyed quite much.

The next step was the photographic one. I mainly shot from the upper point of view, aiming to flatten as much as possible the image in order to create colour fields, like in a traditional painting. Once again, I experimented quite many different camera settings and few lenses. The camera body was a Canon 40D with two optics options: a Canon EF f/4.0 24-105mm and a Canon EF f/2.8 17-55mm. I realized that my choice would have been the 24-105mm lens: versatile, fast, precise, with not much distortion. I worked with big apertures and fast shut-

ter speed. But with the black background small apertures gave the best results, giving a charming expression to the shot.

The processes of cooking, plating and photography melted together in the environment. My atelier and studio was a professional kitchen, all in one. I considered the fact extremely important for the creative process. The kitchen have never been so intimate, I felt in a true creative environment.

6.3 Artworks

Five of the eleven works are next to be introduced, in order to give a concrete example of the *Culinary poetry* project's results.

The red carpet lady (Picture 24) is the first course to appear on the visual menu. The genesis of the idea is the welcoming. Red carpets welcome in some environments. That is the reason of its position: a cold entrance course. It is an allegory of charming lady dressed in red that welcomes the reader to the rest of the menu. A pickled beetroot becomes a ribbon. It become the lady's waved hair, freshly styled, elegant, sinous, winding. Curves, movements, recall hair representation of the classic sculpture. Pickled beetroots are extremely traditional in Finnish food culture. Pickling is an ancient technique of food preserving in many food cultures of the world. It marries perfectly with the minerality of the beetroot in this very case. In terms of taste, the acidity of the pickling technique, prepares the mouth, it cleans it, it welcomes.



PICTURE 24. *The red carpet lady* by Nicolò Arnoldi

Under the surface (Picture 25) is another work that appears in the beginning of the menù. The culinary concept is inspired by the natural environment of the raw materials transformed. All the ingredients are physically found under soil and under water: roots and fish. The dish celebrates poor ingredients. Roots are traditionally consumed in Finnish food culture, like in many other at those latitudes. The dish highlights the magnificent colours of such ingredients, it is a contrast to the pure dark environment they grow in. The selected fish is vendace: in my opinion one of the greatest species that Finnish lakes offer. Another element is burbot salt-cured roe - or bottarga. The burbot roe utilized is the one I was given as a gift by the fisherman during my field trip. Roots were prepared in many variations, some more classic and some more contemporary: carrot and yellow beet purée, dried beetroot dust and beetroot juice jelly, raw striped beet. Vendace are pickled, a true delicacy. The finish is a light touch of strong burbot cured roe. The visual composition is inspired by the vendace filet section geometrical shape: a scalene trapeze. The shape reappears in the ingredients

position, broken by an action painting inspired splashed purée while the dust creates playful shades and light colourfields.



PICTURE 25. *Under the surface* by Nicolò Arnoldi

Contemporary mustamakkara (Picture 26) is one of the menu main courses. It is an interpretation of Tampere's legendary blood sausage. It is a vision on tradition with innovation. The sausage is deconstructed, maintaining blood as the main ingredient. I paid a tribute to another ancient Finnish traditional food, a blood and rye pudding called veripalattu. In fact, the sausage is splitted in a blood pudding and in its other main ingredient: barley. The barley, normally contained inside the sausage is now external, puffed and crunchy. Tradition wants that mustamakkara is served with lingonberries: in this work, lingonberries became a lingonberry cold pressed juice jelly, soft and playful, it reminds acrylic paint.

In this case, history gave me inspiration. It is my form of respect of traditions, sometimes seen as obsolete. Classics never die, so I re-interpreted the most traditional Tampere city product, with a contemporary touch also taken from non-figurative painting.



PICTURE 26. *Contemporary mustamakkara* by Nicolò Arnoldi

The menù continues with *Essentially beloved* (Picture 27), a dedication to one very dear ingredient to me: parsnip. I had my first ever parsnip in Finland. It was love at the first time. In this work an oven roasted parsnip becomes my beloved muse. It is treated in the most essential possible way in order to provide its taste as direct as it could be. Essential. Essential is also the way it is portrayed. A black background and the vegetable. Nothing else is needed in the composition. The caramelization of its surface marries the background and a delicate light brings out the ingredient's volume. Minimal, neat, clean: nothing is hidden. The infinite power of simplicity in taste and in visuals.



PICTURE 27. *Essentially beloved* by Nicolò Arnoldi

Punk-Rock kantarelli! (Picture 28) has a magnificent wild mushroom as protagonist: kantarelli (Eng. chantarelle). It is a dessert, made with a savoury ingredient. It is wrong. A mushroom should not be in an ice-cream. Who said it? I do not care. Dare! Rules? Sometimes they are meant to be broken. The flavour of this specific mushroom suits perfectly in an ice-cream. If slightly poached in a 2:1 ratio syrup, the mushrooms becomes tender and sweet, yet with a bite.

A delicate dessert to end the menù in a futuristic style. The title is inspired by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's futuristic poetry style, a literature movement grown after the Futurism artistic movement in the beginning of the 20th century. The k letter has a rhythm, visual and resonant. Simplicity and neat flavours again are meant to respect the ingredient in its purity.

The ripped parchment paper stripe recalls the classic Punk-Rock albums front cover visuals, contextualizing the culinary idea, title and attitude.



PICTURE 28. *Punk-Rock kantarelli!* By Nicolò Arnoldi

7 HOW CAN CUISINE BE PART OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE?

Cuisine is the discipline of conceptualizing, cooking and presenting food. Cooking is the transformation where time and temperatures are the variables, in a chemical perspective. It is an assemblage of multiple elements that create a new one: a dish. Cuisine is expression: visual and theoretical. Like in a painting, where colours are transformed, paired and mixed in order to create a new whole thing. Like in a song or in a poetry, with notes and words. Single elements evolve passing by the creator's mind, giving birth to a new complex element by adding personality, narrative, visual harmony, beauty, taste. The creator's mind is the filter that makes simple elements to evolve, to step-up in their nature. The features of the creator's persona are variables that shall be considered in this process, like their past, influences from other disciplines, experiences, memories.

Cuisine is a discipline of handcraft, knowledge, exploration. To pair, to transform matter, to express a concept and present it can be an artistic practice. As experienced, food, or more precisely conceptual food provokes an intellectual reaction, like an artwork does.

A dish is composed by the tangible and the intangible: raw materials and ideas. It is a composition with a purpose. Being food the centre of the inquiry, taste must not be forgotten. Taste is pleasure. Taste is memory. Taste provokes a reaction. Smell just like taste provokes reactions, pleasure, awakes feelings and memories. Memory can become a sense itself, in some cases.

A dish is visuals. Plating is the art of food presentation and it is integral to cuisine. It involves again the tangible and the intangible. Vessels, like plates and supports, are the tangible side of the discipline. The intangible side comes from plating concepts connected to the recipe, which merge and become a whole. Plating is complementary to taste and it is true expression, a pursuit of harmony, an experience. A dish is an idea. At certain levels it is a whole story, a whole message, a multidisciplinary experience. It communicates through precise titles its narratives. I consider the presence of a title the key in the storytelling of a dish. It opens the doors to interpretation and understanding, just like in an artwork.

Cuisine can become visual art when there is presentation and representation. Photography is a valuable artistic medium of transformation, it stops time. Applied to cuisine, it melts the structural layers of an executed idea creating a new environment: the image. In this research the medium of expression is cuisine, the medium of representation is photography. Photography was my response to break down the ephemeral of food. I like to think that I demonstrated how culinary photography can be transformed into artistic photography.

Cuisine is a creative discipline, as demonstrated. Cuisine can be artistic and a dish can be an artwork. A dish is not only aesthetics and taste. I think that it is a deeper creation: it is thought and matter. Cuisine is total expression.

REFERENCES

- Adajian, T. Zalta, E. (Ed.). 2018. The Definition of Art. [Online article]. Metaphysics Research Lab. Stanford University. Read on 07.05.2020. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/art-definition/>
- Adrià, F., Blumenthal, H., Keller, T. & McGee, H. 2006. Statement on the 'new cookery'. [Article]. The Guardian. Released on 10.12.2006. Read on 10.04.2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/dec/10/foodanddrink.obsfoodmonthly#maincontent>
- Andrews, C. 2015. The Daily Meal Hall of Fame: Fernand Point. [Online article]. Released on 01.04.2015. Read on 13.03.2020. <https://www.thedailymeal.com/eat/daily-meal-hall-fame-fernand-point>
- Andriquetto, P. 2017. The edible canvas of chef Yann Lejard. [Online article]. Released on 02.2017. Read on 14.04.2020. <http://www.freiheitmag.com/yann-bernard-lejard.html>
- Biography. N.d. Gualtiero Marchesi biography. [Online text]. Official website. Read on 20.04.2020. <https://gualtieromarchesi.it/gualtiero-marchesi?lang=en>
- Deroy, O. Michel, C. Piqueras-Fiszman, B. & Spence, C. 2014. The Plating Manifesto (I): from decoration to creation. *Flavour Journal* 3 (6). <http://www.flavourjournal.com/content/3/1/6>
- Dorfles, G., & Vettese, A. 2011. *Arti visive Il Novecento*. 15th edition. Atlas.
- Gleb, D., Nishimura, L., Del Deo, A., Weaver, M., McGinn, B., Fried, A. & McGinn, B. 2016. *Chef's Table Volume 2. Episode 1 Grant Achatz*. [Video]. Netflix original documentary serie. Published in 2016. Referred on 13.04.2020. <https://www.netflix.com/>
- Liedtke, W. 2003. Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe 1600–1800. [Online article]. Released on 10.2003. The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York. Read on 20.05.2019. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm
- Marchesi, G. & Dal Falco, N. 2016. *Opere/Works*. 1st edition. Cinquesensi.
- Meagher, J. 2009. Food and Drink in European Painting 1400–1800. [Online article]. Released on 05.2009. The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York. Read on 19.05.2019. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/food/hd_food.htm
- Meisner, G. 2012. What is Phi? (The Basics of Golden Ratio). [Online article]. Released on 16.05.2012. Read on 11.05.2020. <https://goldennumber.net/what-is-phi/>

Perullo, N. 2017. Can Cuisine Be Art?: A Philosophical (and Heterodox) Proposal. Bottinelli, S. & D'Ayala Valva, M. (Ed.). 2017. The Taste of Art Cooking, Food, and Counterculture in Contemporary Practices. The University of Arkansas Press.

Raviv, Y. N.d. Food and Art: Changing Perspective on Food as a Creative Medium. [Essay]. Read on 06.05.2020.
https://www.academia.edu/35619548/Food_and_Art_Changing_Perspectives_on_Food_as_a_Creative_Medium

Rovere, M. N.d. Viaggio nella storia della fotografia. [Online article]. Nikon School Official. Read on 13.04.2020. <http://www.nikonschool.it/corso-breve-storia-fotografia/index>

Scruton, R. & Munro, T. 2019. Aesthetics Definition, Approaches, Development, & Facts. [Online article]. Encyclopedia Britannica. Read on 27.03.2019.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/aesthetics>

Sipahi, S. & Yilmaz, H. 2017. An Evaluation on the Relation between Gastronomy and Art: The Case of Ferran Adria. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4 (11), 329-334. <http://www.prosoc.eu>

The World's 50 Best Restaurants. N.d. El Celler de Can Roca. [Online article]. Official website. Read on 04.04.2020.
<https://www.theworlds50best.com/awards/best-of-the-best/el-celler-de-can-roca.html>

Wolf, J. 2012. Impressionism Movement Overview and Analysis. [Online article]. Released on 01.02.2012. Read on 28.05.2019.
<https://www.theartstory.org/movement-impressionism-history-and-concepts.htm>

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Still_Life_with_Fruit_\(Caravaggio\)#/media/File:Still_life_-_Caravaggio.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Still_Life_with_Fruit_(Caravaggio)#/media/File:Still_life_-_Caravaggio.png)

Picture 2.

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/pablo-picasso/still-life-with-lemon-and-jug-1936>

Picture 3.

Picture by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2017.

Picture 4.

Picture by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2018.

Picture 5; Picture 6.

Pictures by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2019.

Picture 7.

<https://www.finedininglovers.it/articolo/pietro-leeman-joia-piatti>

Picture 8; Picture 9.

Chef's Table. Gelb et al. 2016. <https://www.netflix.com/>. Screen capture by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2020.

Picture 10; Picture 11.

yblinc official. Lejard. Instagram. Screen capture by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2020.

Picture 12; Picture 13.

<https://www.fuorimagazine.it/blog/shooting/?permalink=gualtiero-marchesi-il-cuoco-il-mito>

Picture 14; Picture 15; Picture 16; Picture 17; Picture 18; Picture 19; Picture 20; Picture 21; Picture 22; Picture 23.

Pictures by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2017.

Picture 24; Picture 25; Picture 26; Picture 27; Picture 28.

Pictures by Nicolò Arnoldi. 2018.