GASTRONOMIC ARCHITECTURE

Recipes for a New Architectural Cuisine

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AHST 5110 - Thesis
Final Document

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“Truly great flavor - the kind that produces plan old jaw-dropping wonder - is a powerful lens into the natural world because taste breaks through the delicate things we can’t see or perceive. Taste is a soothsayer, a truth teller. And it can be a guide in reimagining our food system, and our diets from the ground up.”

- Dan Barber, Chef and Co-owner of Blue Hill at Stone Barns

“The attention to color is not just for show: For all the talk of the tongue and palate, our eyes are arguably the most important gustatory organ...more than half of our cortical real estate is dedicated to processing vision - just a percent or two is given over to taste facilities. The result is not just that color flavors our expectations: it actually changes how we taste food.”

- Tom Vanderbilt in “The Colors We Eat”
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STATEMENT

This thesis uses the language, structure, and visual strategy of the culinary arts as a vehicle for exploring the architecture of the current dining environment and as a tool for generating didactic new dining typologies.

01 Plating by Eleven Madison Park

02 Drawing by MOS Architects
This thesis analyzes five different restaurant typologies, including fast food, fast-casual, casual-fine, fine, and ultrafine, which includes restaurants that have received a Michelin star; these five restaurant typologies are analyzed for their relationship to context, access to natural resources, spatial organization, dining sequence, and presentation, as well as for other architecturally significant spatial implications. This analysis is arranged into a matrix of architectural “ingredients,” with the different restaurant typologies organized along the horizontal, and the different categories for spatial analysis organized along the vertical.

Using this matrix of architectural ingredients, the thesis then combines multiple ingredients from different categories of spatial analysis as well as different restaurant typologies to create three architectural “entrees.” These entrees are didactic new dining conditions that ultimately aim to distill and slow the process of preparing and enjoying a meal. They aim to strike a balance between knowing where our food comes from while also meeting the fast pace of modern consumer culture, which includes quickly responding to changes in climate and trends. These three entrees can be scaled to fit into any context or climate, and can also be manipulated to reflect and celebrate different culinary traditions.

Ultimately, the thesis is an exploration in architectural storytelling and narrative; it is grounded in a deep interest for thoughtful research, data collection, visualization, and graphic design. The structure of the thesis in itself creates a new form of architectural discourse that is inspired by culinary language; this structure tries to visually unpack the complexities of gastronomy, while also maintaining a visual ambiguity that allows the viewer
PLATING COMPOSITION + ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGY

“Taste seems so inviolable because it takes place inside of us; like a secret memory, only we can taste what we can see - how could it betray us? But before food gets to us, our eyes have already seasoned it.”

- Tom Vanderbilt in “The Colors We Eat”
PLATING COMPOSITION

Gestalt's Principles
Plate Exposure
Orientation, Sequence, + Timing
Distribution + Spacing
Brightness and Color

SELECTED CHEFS + PLATES

Dan Barber
Daniel Humm
Dominique Crenn
Ferran Adria
Rene Redzepi
Grant Achatz

ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGIES

Sprinkle
Fold
Cover
Layer
Break
Slice
Pile
Surround
Toss
Swipe
Stuff
Pour
Gestalt’s Principles

These principles compromise a set of 6 strategies for visual organization. In the 1920’s, a group of students developed the principles in an effort to understand how we understand the physical world around us. The strategies include figure-ground, similarity, proximity, continuation, closure, and symmetry. These strategies are used in a variety of design disciplines to achieve aesthetic strength and clarity, including architecture, graphic design, and plating.

Plate Exposure + Structure

The amount of plate exposed in the dish is critical to a successful composition. In the restaurants I have chosen to study, the dish is often an object within a field, a rigorously composed piece of edible art resting on its canvas. The plate in itself is also a source for storytelling and strategy. Similar to architects that must consciously select a site and materiality that relates to overall design strategy, chefs must carefully select plates for color and structure to complement the story of the dish.

01, 02 diagram by author

03 http://www.fantasticfrank.se/
When a plate is set down before the consumer, it must be oriented in a precise way in order to tell the story the Chef wishes to tell. The plate must also be set down with correct timing, and the plate dish must remain as close to the imagine temperature as possible. Without dedication to orientation, sequence, and timing, the essence of the dish is lost. Architects must also pay close attention to site orientation and circulation strategy in order to curate the user experience.

Similar to orientation and plate exposure, the distribution of items on a plate allows the chef to tell a very direct visual story. The spacing of items around the plate allows speak to the Chef’s aesthetic strategy. For an architect, the placement of program on the site allows her to create a path. Programmatic elements must also be spaced appropriately in order to occupy the site in a strategic, intentional way.

The brightness and color of the dish can have more influence than all of the other compositional strategies. The color of the food can affect the flavor of the food, for good and bad. Our taste buds are trained to perceive certain tastes with certain colors, just as we expect stairs to feel a certain rhythm and doors to have a standard size. Chefs and architects must combine color strategies with compositional strategies to challenge perception and flavor.

see orientation, sequence  
see site, circulation  
see color theory
GESTALT’S PRINCIPLES

In the 1920’s, a group of German psychologists developed a set of principles to describe how objects are visually perceived. They were curious about why we perceive objects as a whole, instead of as a collection of individual parts, and they believed that our minds use these ordering principles to make sense of the world around us. For example, when you recognize a familiar face across the street, your mind makes sense of all the parts of the face, including the nose, ears, mouth, eyes, and hair, instead of individually processing each of these features (Busche). These principles for visual organization can be applied across a range of design disciplines, including architecture, plating, and graphic design, and if used successfully, strengthen the ultimate design strategy by more directly engaging the viewer or consumer.

The Gestalt’s Principles originally included the principle of figure-ground, proximity, continuation, closure, and similarity, and have grown to include the principle of common fate, parallelism/symmetry, and common region. These principles allow the whole visual presentation of an object to appear greater than the sum of the individual design moves. Using these principles, illustrated to the right, I will explore 12 different plates found at 6 of the world’s most influential restaurants to develop a set of 12 architectural principles.


This principle describes when objects that are close together are perceived as together; the collection of individual objects is read as one object.

This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out against its background. Figure ground conditions can be manipulated using contrasting colors and sizes.

This principle states that objects that are grouped with a sense of direction will read as moving in that direction.

This principle states that even if an object is not physically continuous, if a sense of direction is implied, then the eye will perceive the object as continuous.

This principle states that objects that share a similar color, texture, orientation, size, or form will be perceived as one object.

This principle states that objects arranged in symmetry to one another will be read as one object; objects that share a similar slope will also be read as one object.

01 - 06 diagram by author
PLATE EXPOSURE + STRUCTURE

The physical plate is crucial member of the plating process and aesthetic strategy. Plates must be considered for structural integrity, color, and texture. Many chefs select simple, white dishes so that the food may stand on its own, however a ceramic piece can also serve as another vehicle to express a certain aesthetic or story. The color of the plate can also have an affect on the flavor of the dish. In one study, subjects reported that “strawberry mouse tasted better on a white round plate than on a black square plate” (Nautilus).

The structure of the plate aids in the stability of the dish. A flat plate can be used for dryer dishes, whereas an angled plate that has an area for liquids to pool in could be used for any dish with a sauce. A plate’s profile must be considered when plating a dish in order to maintain the integrity of the dish.

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01 Ceramics by Wurst Studio
02 Ceramics by Studio Oyama
03 diagram by author
ORIENTATION, SEQUENCE, AND TIMING

What sets apart the restaurants that I have selected from all of the other qualified options is the presence of a tasting menu. A tasting menu can last anywhere between three to fifty courses, and usually has an assembly of smaller plates rather than a couple of larger, more filling plates. In Dan Jurafsky’s Standford lecture series “The Language of Food,” he finds that menus at fine dining restaurants have fewer words than menus at cheaper restaurants; the cheaper restaurants also offer the diner with an array of entree options, whereas the fine dining restaurants, such as those that you see selected on the right, offer one tasting menu with no exceptions (Jurafsky). The tasting menu allows the chef to curate the consumer experience and tell a very specific gastronomic story, and ultimately, “the performative meals raise one’s consciousness about eating” (Log). For example, Dominque Crenn’s 14 dishes are each paired with a line on a piece of poetry that is given to the diner at the beginning of the meal; as the diner follows along, the plates are distributed with rhythm and structure that paints a flavorful picture of Dominque’s childhood home in France.

Figure 02 shows the first meal, titled “Birth,” which corresponds with “Summer has come with it’s cool breeze.” Figure 03 depicts the dessert scene at Alinea, in Chicago, where the staff plates the dessert directly in front of the diner. This allows the dessert to stay at ideal temperature for serving and commands the diner’s attention towards the table during the plating process.

The tasting menu is not only dependent on time for rhythm, but also depends on time in order to ensure that dishes arrive in front of the diner as quickly as possible, so that the ideal temperature of the dish can be maintained from kitchen to table. Whether the chef intends for a dish to be served piping hot or freezing cold, it is imperative to eliminate as much time as possible from the final plating to the moment the dish is placed in front of the diner, in order to maintain the integrity of the dish. All dishes are oriented towards the diner in a very specific manner; the orientation is another method the chef can use in order to curate a very detailed dining experience.

Jurafsky, Dan and Matsumoto, Yoshiko. “How to Read a Menu.” Class lecture, Think 53 Food Talks: The Language of Food, Stanford University, Berkeley, California, April 26 2016.


01 Diagram by Author
02 Atelier Crenn
03 Diagram by Author
01 Plate Orientation Strategies

02

03 Plate Orientation Strategies
DISTRIBUTION AND SPACING

The distribution and spacing of food on the plate is another design method chefs use in plate composition. As Dan Jurafsky points out in his lecture “The Language of Food,” many cheaper restaurants focus on the quantity of items, and use words of abundance such as “gigantic” and “a lot” to emphasize quantity over quality (Jurafsky). However, many of the finer dining restaurants focus on quality, not quantity, and use white space to their advantage. Items can be spaced apart, as seen in the top left image, which allows the diner to experience flavors more individually and to mix flavors and textures according to her own preferences. Items can also be mixed together, as seen in the bottom two images, which ensures that the diner is experiencing the full flavor of the dish in each bite. Spacing between items determines the degree to which the flavors mix, and should be controlled by the character of the tasting menu.

Similar to orientation, items can also be distributed along the plate in order to create unique or telling compositions. The bottom two images use spacing and distribution on the plate to imply a sense of direction. In the bottom left image, the clover assembly appears to leave behind a trail of seasonings as it moves right across the plate; in the image on the right, the greens appear to be swirling around the plate, leaving a green sauce in their wake. Both compositions lead themselves to Noma’s overall design strategy and gastronomic story.

Jurafsky, Dan and Matsumoto, Yoshiko. “How to Read a Menu.” Class lecture, Think 53 Food Talks: The Language of Food, Stanford University, Berkeley, California, April 26 2016.

01 Blue Hill at Stone Barns
02 Blue Hill at Stone Barns
03 Noma
04 Noma
BRIGHTNESS AND COLOR

The color of the food can significantly impact the perceived flavor of a dish. Our minds and palates are trained to associate certain colors with certain flavors and foods; in fact, “food companies scan their products on the line with custom colorimeters to ensure mathematically consistent hues,” resulting in orange juice and tomatoes that are regulated to have a certain color (Vanderbilt). Studies show that when the color differs from our expectations, the flavor shifts as well.

Our associations with color and flavor are not permanent, and can be carefully and intentionally readjusted using good design strategy. Chefs use plating techniques to lead the consumer through new flavor experiences, ones that often challenge preconceived notions of flavor and color. A greater exploration into design strategies used in plating could not teach us how to “learn to like new colors of food, [it can] also help us learn to like new foods” (Vanderbilt). Strategic application and experimentation with color in architecture and in food is critical for a more intentional, efficient, and enjoyable food system.

In the image to the right, photo filters were applied to various foods to alter the standard color.


01 Image from “The Colors We Eat,” additional diagramming by author
DAN BARBER

Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Pocantico Hills, NY

Shares the title of “Father of Farm-to-Table” restaurant movement with Alice Waters of Chez Panisse

DANIEL HUMM

Eleven Madison Park
New York City, NY

One of the leading culinary masterminds in New York City; open to culinary experimentation and making mistakes

DOMINIQUE CRENN

Atelier Crenn
San Francisco, CA

Currently holds title for “World’s Best Female chef”

FERRAN ADRIA

El Bulli
Gerona, Spain

Father of Molecular Gastronomy; historically considered “The World’s Greatest Chef”

RENE REDZEPI

NOMA
Copenhagen, Denmark

Spearheads “Manifesto for a New Nordic Cuisine” and has influenced approaches towards a minimal, intentional cuisine around the world

BEN SHREWY

Attica
Melbourne, Australia

“Food can have a deeper meaning than just another item to consume; it can be evocative, emotional and thought provoking, appealing to all of the senses.”
-Ben Shrewy
CHEFS

Over the course of the thesis, I studied and documented many different chefs and restaurants. I received many recommendations from peers and colleagues, and I gathered information from cooking shows, documentaries, magazines, and restaurant reviews. The following six chefs and their tasting menus were selected because between the six of them, they each represent a different approach to gastronomy.

Dan Barber, widely considered as one of the founding fathers of the Farm-to-Table restaurant movement, leads a restaurant, farm, and educational center in Upstate New York, where ingredients travel only hundreds of feet before the meal preparation in the evenings. His book *The Third Plate: Field Notes on the Future of Food* has served as early inspiration for this project. Dominique Crenn pairs each item on her tasting menu with a piece of poetry, and uses flavor and word to share her childhood memories with consumers. Daniel Humm uses the tasting menu as an opportunity to tell stories about New York City’s history and traditions. Similar to Dan Barber, both Ben Shrewy and Rene Redzepi are renowned for their attention to local, seasonal ingredients; however, Rene Redzepi’s “Manifesto for a New Nordic Cuisine,” which lists ten principles and strategies for ethical, local cuisine, has brought him international fame (Funch). Ferran Adria is by far the most establish and influential; he is considered the father of Molecular Gastronomy and for many years the “World’s Greatest Chef;” his work at El Bulli has paved the way for a new form of fine dining (McInerney).

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NOMA
Principles used: Proximity, Similarity
Plate Exposure: 60%; Left Orientation
Even distribution

NOMA
Principles used: Figure-Ground, Continuation
Plate Exposure: 55%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

NOMA
Principles used: Symmetry, Closure
Plate Exposure: 50%; Center Orientation
Uneven Distribution

Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Principles used: N/A
Plate Exposure: 30%; Orientation N/A
Uneven distribution

Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Principles used: Similarity
Plate Exposure: 40%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Principles used: N/A
Plate Exposure: 30%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

El Bulli
Principles used: Similarity, Symmetry
Plate Exposure: 80%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

El Bulli
Principles used: N/A
Plate Exposure: 60%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

El Bulli
Principles used: Symmetry
Plate Exposure: 60%; Center Orientation
Uneven Distribution
Eleven Madison Park
Principles used: Continuation
Plate Exposure: 25%; Upper Orientation
Uneven Distribution

Eleven Madison Park
Principles used: Continuation
Plate Exposure: 60%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

Eleven Madison Park
Principles used: Proximity, Similarity
Plate Exposure: 60%; Upper Orientation
Even Distribution

Atelier Crenn
Principles used: Figure-Ground
Plate Exposure: 95%; Off-Center Orientation
Uneven Distribution

Atelier Crenn
Principles used: Symmetry, Figure-Ground
Plate Exposure: 75%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

Atelier Crenn
Principles used: Continuation
Plate Exposure: 75%; Center Orientation
Even Distribution

Attica
Principles used: Similarity
Plate Exposure: 70%; Orientation N/A
Even Distribution

Attica
Principles used: Similarity
Plate Exposure: 65%; Orientation N/A
Even Distribution

Attica
Principles used: Proximity, Similarity
Plate Exposure: 65%; Off-Center Orientation
Even Distribution
ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGIES

Using the compositional plating data distilled from plates at the chosen six restaurants, I developed twelve different architectural strategies that can be used to describe overarching gastronomic strategies. Each architectural strategy is embedded with layers of compositional design. For example, the “swipe” strategy is often associated with figure-ground, continuation, and closure, and is usually employed in dishes where the plate is mostly exposed. The “sprinkle” strategy is only associated with the Gestalt’s law for proximity and similarity, but is useful for any orientation and any amount of exposed plate.

These relationships between plating strategy and architectural strategy will ultimately inform the story and direction of the final compositions and recipes. Acknowledging the “dazzling proof” of the immense sophistication that can be achieved using the language of food and the grammar of cuisine, ideas and forms have tempted our senses and our minds as much as tastes, textures and smells,” the thesis will use these forms as a new lens for understanding the built environment and responding to unbuilt proposals that feed the imagination.
ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGIES VS PLATING STRATEGIES

sprinkle  
fold  
cover  
layer  
break  
slice  
pile  
surround  
tass  
swipe  
stuff  
pour  

figure-ground  
proximity  
similarity  
symmetry  
continuation  
closure  
> 50% plate exposure  
< 50% plate exposure  
center orientation  
off-center orientation  
left or right orientation  
top or bottom orientation  
items evenly distributed  
items not evenly distributed
01-12 Diagrams by Author
04 LAYER
05 BREAK
06 PILE
10 TOSS
11 SURROUND
12 SLICE
This thesis takes inspiration from built and unbuilt form, and will explore architecture with a compositional lens during the design semester. The following precedents and case studies serve as guiding examples for built and unbuilt proposals, but more importantly, demonstrate the power of narrative and composition in architectural discourse.
BUILT ARCHITECTURE

*Nest We Grow
NOMA + NOMA Food Lab
*Pasona Office Building
Tartu Nature House
Stedsans

PAPER ARCHITECTURE

*Wonderland
*Citizens of No Place
Siteless: 1001 Building Forms
Fabiola Morcillo
*MOS Architects

INSPIRATION

* denotes case study
NEST WE GROW

Kengo Kuma and UC Berkeley, College of Environmental Design
Hokkaido, Japan
2014

A concise, open-air manifestation of the processes required for growing, harvesting, storing, cooking, dining, and composting.

Responding to a strong appreciation of food and wood joinery techniques, this project aimed to create a public community structure for a Japanese community where they could grow, store, harvest, and prepare meals together. The five different programmatic elements of growing, harvesting, storing, cooking, and composting intersect sectionally, creating complex yet intimate gathering spaces. This project successfully and humbly uses the facade as an opportunity for vegetable growth, and also incorporates food production throughout the circulation of the structure. The structure is beautifully composed and responds to a traditional Japanese technique for column manufacturing that assembles strips of wood instead of using one solid piece. Most significantly, the passive nature of this project successfully responds to the seasons, allowing the environment to inform the productivity of the building instead of the building occupants informing the productivity of the environment. This project is significant to my thesis because it carefully represents and overlaps different programmatic elements that are related to cooking processes; though I am pursuing a more representational strategy, “Nest We Grow” is one of the only examples I could find that represented a structure where growing and design coexisted with architecture.
plants grow along the face of the building and in the space between the tea room and circulation. Plants can be harvested directly from the path that encompasses the structure. Plants can be hung to dry along the circulation path.

Dining is kept in the center of the space; there is also a traditional tea room in the center of the structure. Composting is tucked away into the rammed earth.

Cooking along bottom level allows you to take advantage of the heat from the rammed earth foundation.
PASONA OFFICE BUILDING

Kono Designs, Architect
Tokyo, Japan
2013

This office building sprinkles hydroponic growing systems along the building’s circulation paths to encourage occupants to create and embellish their own meals.

This office in Tokyo is just over 200,00 SF but they have dedicated 20% of the square footage to the production of vegetables and fruits, and provided the space necessary to prepare meals with these fresh ingredients during the day. The facade is a typical response to integrate agriculture into the urban realm, but this facade allows access to the growing areas from the inside. The most successful component is found internally, within nodes of circulation and gathering. At these nodes, office workers find hydroponic ponds growing fresh flowers and herbs, or hanging baskets growing tomatoes above the dining table. This approach of sprinkling productive areas throughout the circulation and common areas is a convenient and effective strategy for providing fresh produce to the urban dweller. It also brings bright color into the office space, and serves as an educational opportunity for people that are not typically exposed to agricultural processes.


02, 03 diagrams by author
01 access to produce

02 built architecture

03 harvesting vignettes

04 dining room

05 common area
TARTU NATURE HOUSE

KARISMA, Architect
Tartu, Estonia
2013

This project is part zoo, botanical garden, and school, with courtyard areas dedicated to outdoor activity such as planting, concerts, and lecture. I like this project due to the playfulness of growing spaces, which occupy both interior and exterior zones. Due to the dynamic, hilly site, the structure is sectionally rich, allowing traditional auditorium style seating to mesh with landscaping strategies.

01, 02 http://www.archdaily.com/589007/tartu-nature-house-karisma-architects-2
NOMA FOOD LAB

Copenhagen, Denmark
2015

Rene Redzepi, Chef of Noma and ringleader of New Nordic Cuisine, has created a cult movement of food culture and aesthetic. The dishes at his restaurant in Copenhagen use pure ingredients and are expertly plated to present exquisite gastronomic experiences. Outside of Noma, Redzepi created the Noma Food Lab, which houses the a non profit called the Nordic Food Lab. The food laboratory tests the limits of ingredients and develops new gastronomic and cooking techniques. It is a very experimental space that is currently focusing on fermentation of insects and research on the gastronomic sensory experience. Highlight projects in the past have included liquor made from wasps, dishes uses tree bark for flavor, and sensory mapping experiments. Their playful, experimental approach to food in this lab and the corresponding research serves as a resource for gastronomic possibilities and applications.

01, 02 The Nordic Food Lab, http://nordicfoodlab.org/
WONDERLAND

Jessica Ordaz-Garcia and Stephanie Tager, Authors
Syracuse University, New York
2016

A creative application of the architecture of children’s literature to a variety of programmatic approaches.

Though this project is not realized, the approach of their thesis serves as a constant source of inspiration, guidance, and encouragement for my own project. The thesis is exploring the architecture of 16 different children's literature books, and find four unique ways to represent the information. Following a careful study of the books and identification of architectural themes and clues, the students arrange the 16 stories on a grid; the representations here are abstract and concise, but the graphics of each story find a way to connect to the adjacent grid space. Second, the students explored a vertical structure and created a hypothetical, site-less urban children’s playground. Third, the students curated a series of architectural themes that existed across story lines and created their own children’s alphabet book where each letter corresponded with an architectural principle. This project is successful in its graphic representation, depth of research, and variety of playful solutions. It successfully applies colorful storytelling strategies to an imaginary realm that truly engages the viewer.
CITIZENS OF NO PLACE

Jimenez Lai, Authors
Syracuse University, New York
2012

A graphic novel that criticizes the architecture profession and architectural discourse.

Jimenez Lai’s book is a great example for how a study of architecture can look beyond the scale of a building. Using a small cast of characters and two different “sites,” or worlds, he emphasizes the importance of objectivity in design and reminds us that not all details need to be perfectly programmed for the occupant; it is good to provide structure in a design, but to also allow the occupant to be able to curate their own experience. He also reminds us that thousands of years from now, our civilization can only be judged by the architectural remnants left behind. This is a refreshing read and take on the power and limitations of architecture. It is a critical piece that guides the program for this thesis proposal; though I do not plan to pursue illustration at this scale of storytelling, I do see the book, arranged by chapter or vignettes, as a valuable tool for presenting a proposal and design that is not fully grounded in a context or reality.
CHAPTER TITLES

01 Conversations with a Developer

02 Noah’s Ark in Space

03 Point Clouds

04 Babel

05 Obsession Accelerator

06 Drifting Cities of a Past

07 Plan versus Section

08 On Types of Robustness

09 Primitives

10 Future Archeologies
SITELESS: 1001 BUILDING FORMS

François Blanciak
Published through the MIT Press
2008

An active cataloging of whimsical architectural forms, each individually crafted for a major city

In this book, the author visits six major cities and catalogs simple architectural forms that are directly inspired by the vibrant urban fabric. More often than not, the forms are whimsical representations that speak to an architectural quirk of the city. Each diagram is paired with a simple title that successfully inserts the reader into the author’s narrative. At the end of the book, he author tests some of the forms with 3D printing techniques. The pairing of text with drawing, and the density of information, creates a catalog of forms that are could be used to inspire a development of the urban fabric on any site in any city. All of the drawings challenge the traditional development of an architectural concept; the form is driven by the narrative of the city and speak to a formal chaos that traditional architecture is often hesitant to embrace. François’ technique for gathering and transcribing information will serve as inspiration for data collection in the spring design semester.

Fabiola combines technical drawings and illustration using AutoCAD. In the past two years, she has created a series of architectural vignettes that are inspired by stories, histories, and pop culture. The axonometric style gives her a consistent structure and representational language, allowing the colors, textures, and icons to tell a clear visual narrative. This axons are a source of inspiration for the architectural vignettes that I would like to design to illustrate the relationship between food and architecture. Fabiola’s drawings stand out to me because they are animated but simplistic, architectural and imaginative.

01, 02 http://www.archdaily.com/787926/1989-architectural-space-through-illustration
MOS ARCHITECTS

Michael Meredith, Hilary Sample
New York City, NY

MOS Architects “rejects the ordinary;” their whimsical project drawings inform an eccentric, playful body of work.

Chefs and architects are storytellers, and one image that struck me in the fall were these drawings by MOS architects from their Venice Biennale exhibition. These drawings rely on pattern, color, and geometry to imply a variety of spatial experiences. The drawing is less about the architecture itself, and more about the atmosphere of the space and the anecdotes of the characters that occupy the space. The drawing encourages the viewer to construct their own narrative by employing the viewer’s memory, emotion, and curiosity, this allowing the viewer to more successfully insert themselves into the architectural scene. The rendering style creates a scene that is episodic and multivalent, and is richly layered with architectural stories; I believe that the quality of this style challenges the success of a typical architectural rendering, which is singular and one dimensional.

In the spring, this drawing served as a constant source of inspiration and guidance, and a dense resource that I could continue to visually explore and unpack to determine why it was so successful and then apply those principles to my own project. I was able to paint and diagram the drawing in Tiffany Lin’s “Architectural Painting” class and apply MOS Architects’ layering techniques to my final entree drawings.

01 drawing by MOS Architects
02, 03 paintings by Chesley McCarty for “Architectural Painting”
04, 05 hand drawn diagrams by Tiffany Lin and Chesley McCarty for “Architectural Painting”
FIRST CHAPTER - FALL
ON THE MENU

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A Brief History on Current Food Consumptions Patterns
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El Bulli
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Foundations of Molecular Gastronomy
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Plating Composition + Strategy
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Gestalt’s Rules for Visual Organization
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Architectural Strategy
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Design Proposal
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Annotated Bibliography
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INTRODUCTION

For as long as humankind has occupied the planet, food and shelter have served as cornerstones to society and civilization. Where one found food, one found gathering, and with gathering came shelter, community, and a sense of place. Up until the last century, ingredients were simple, and mealtimes were purely a moment to gather and to nourish. Yet in the past century, mass production and monoculture have reshaped both the built environment and a diner’s notion of eating. In the built environment, cities sprawl uncontrollably and highways define new industrial landscapes; people spend hours in the car getting to work, only to rise hundreds of feet up in the air to a vista that overlooks suburbia. “Paper Architecture,” or visionary architecture that is bounded by paper, emerged as a representational practice and method for architectural criticism in response to the vast changes in the built environment. As for food, consumers expect food that is fast, fresh, and cheap, and by the time the hours are clocked, the kids are picked up, and they finally get home, there is little time to focus on a fresh, wholesome meal made from local ingredients. Our taste buds and our architecture have responded to a widening gap between producer and consumer, between craft and cuisine. In light of this, chefs emerge as mocking jays the night, using a mere plate as a canvas to create dishes that rebel against the standards of American food culture. As the architects of food, the world’s top chefs use architectural techniques to find new, creative ways to present ingredients in ways that educate, nourish, and tell stories. Their knowledge of composition and flavor is a trove of data for new, unparalleled ways for rethinking our architectural relationship with food; in an ideal world, architecture and consumption would coexist and benefit from one another. In this thesis, I will carefully study and document a handful of the world’s most influential chefs, who have each made strong compositional contributions to dining. Using their compositional strategies, I will then determine a set of architectural guiding principles; compositional strategy and architectural strategy are not only key tools for understanding the plating of food, but can also be applied to understand the built environment. Finally, I will use these compositional and architectural plating strategies as tools for designing a new architectural cuisine, one that is informed by plating composition and challenges food’s current relationship with the built environment. This paper architecture, called “Recipes and Stories for a New Architectural Cuisine,” will be a vision for a new world where taste and architecture coexist.

01 Restaurant: Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Before we can understand the importance of chefs and plating in modern dining, let’s first consider how we even arrived to our current state of consumption patterns. Mankind could not exist without food and shelter, because “culture began when the raw got cooked” (Log, 3). Similar to architecture, food has shaped the evolution of many disciplines and cultures; it “links politics to culture and health, our bodies to our minds and to our environment. Consider its role in human survival and pleasure, in nature, in science, in cultural tradition and experimentation” (Log, 9). Up until the Anthropocene era, our current era and the era considered the most damaging to the planet’s resource, ingredients were humbly assembled over a fire, in the earth, in water, germinated by air, or any combination of these practices (Pollan). Michael Pollan’s documentary series and book Cooked explores these four simple practices that drove meal production before industrialization introduced more efficient, faster, and cheaper methods (Pollan). Shortly after mass production emerged as a tool for food production and quality control, food began to “shape cities... along with the countryside” (Log, 17). Families needed nourishment that was quick and satisfying, cheap and easy. Mass production is often associated with damaging agricultural practices, and rightly so; monocultures and “big food” are resource and land intensive, yet the product is always nutrient poor in comparison to a similar product grown on an organic, permaculture farm (Pollan).

The image of industrial farming and fast food culture is simple to visualize, and difficult to ignore; however, this thesis is interested in understanding our current food culture with a lens that looks beyond the effect of agriculture. Karen Hess takes the exploration of industrialization’s damage to the food industry to a new step, finding that “most Americans have grown so accustomed to mass-produced, artificially flavored food that anything else tastes peculiar” (Hess, 3). She exclaims, “Americans have been mouth-washed by generations of bad food and brain-washed by generations of bad advice about food, culminating in a gourmet plague (Hess, 2). Architecture has lent itself to this culinary cleansing by placing fast food restaurants along highways, building sprawling suburbs with low housing density, and constructing towering skyscrapers in dense cities that limit access to fresh, nutritional food. Restaurants use “bright primary colors and loud, fast music to encourage people to eat faster,” and streets are planned to allow easy access in and out of the nearest drive-through (New Yorker).
In response to this culinary shift, chefs at fine dining restaurants have gained prominence both inside and outside of the kitchen by using dishes to illuminate problems with current food culture and propose solutions. Although the chef “will always be expected to produce delicious, honest, and safe food, just as in centuries past,” the chef now also serves the role of activist and storyteller (Log, 54). This shift began with a restaurant called El Bulli, located in Catalonia, Spain and operating under the leadership of Chef Ferran Adria; Adria began working at the restaurant in the 1960s, following his time in the war. By the 1970s, he had created an entirely new form of cuisine called molecular gastronomy, the chemical study of how temperature, texture, color, and pattern can manipulate flavor. At El Bulli, Adria “invented new techniques of production – such as spherification and culinary foam – and, even more important, reinvented dinner as such, representing food as a disruptive symphony in which tastes, textures, fragrances, memories, and connotations introduced new sensations to the possibilities inherent in food” (Log, 49-50). In essence, Adria created what we have come to know as a tasting menu, which allow the chef to present a series of smaller portioned, more intentional dishes as opposed to the larger portions found at many other restaurants. Adria challenged conventional cooking techniques as a new design opportunity, and his contributions continue to shape culinary discourse today.

FOUNDATIONS OF MOLECULAR GASTRONOMY

Since Adria’s contributions, chefs have continued to develop, refine, manipulate and add to gastronomic practices that challenge a diner’s expectations of food, both in portion and in composition. To this day, chefs strive to cater to an American’s portion expectations, which was “based on the hegemony of the choicest cuts,” meaning that the plate has more meat than vegetables (Log, 62). Portions have also remained larger than they need to be, but as Dan Barber finds, “the architecture of the plate has shifted little throughout the years” and diners sometimes struggle to adapt to new concepts of portion and proportion (Log, 60). However, these fine dining restaurants act as hubs for culinary experimentation and curiosity, and practices that become mainstream within their walls ultimately trickle down to affect culinary practices found at more common restaurants. It must be noted that there is an undeniable disconnect between the plating found at fine dining restaurants and cheaper, chain restaurants. In Dan Jurafsky’s book and lecture “The Language of Food,” he finds that unlike cheaper restaurants that pride themselves on options and quantity, the tasting menus at fine dining establishments provide no exceptions or options, and focus on quality over quantity (Jurafsky). Though tasting menus at fine dining restaurants sometimes require a series of special tools and ingredients, their design strategies could reveal the secret to a new form of dining that challenges traditional patterns of consumption. The tools needed to make El Bulli’s culinary food can be bought as a box set online, and tricks on how to make food look more appetizing fill the Internet. Despite the wide gap between fine dining and cheaper, chain restaurants, a plated, tasting menu can tell us something about the future of food consumption.

01 Diagram by Author
02 Molecular Gastronomy at El Bulli
03 Spherification at El Bulli
VARIABLES THAT AFFECT GUSTATION

GUSTATION

TASTE

SIGHT

OLFACTORY

AUDITORY

PRIMARY TASTE

SALTY

SWEET

UMAMI

BITTER

SOUR

PUNGENCE

COOLNESS

NUMBNESS

ASTRIGENCY

METALLICNESS

CALCIUM

HEARTINESS

TEMPERATURE

STARCHINESS

SECONDARY TASTE

STARCHINESS

TEMPERATURE

HEARTINESS

METALLICNESS

ASTRIGENCY

NUMBNESS

COOLNESS

PUNGENCE

SOUR

SWEET

UMAMI

BITTER

SALTY

TASTE

SIGHT

OLFACTORY

AUDITORY
Plating in a tasting menu is highly dependent on visual composition, and is actually more dependent on visual composition than flavor. In Tom Vanderbilt’s article “The Colors We Eat,” he finds that “our eyes are the most important gustatory organ...more than half of our cortical real estate is dedicated to processing vision – just a percent or two is given over to taste facilities,” meaning that the color and presentation of the food doesn’t just “flavor our expectations: it actually changes how we taste the food” (Vanderbilt). Vanderbilt questions if “we can learn to like new colors of food, [then] colors can also help us learn to like new foods” (Vanderbilt). Vanderbilt is reaffirming the work that the masterminds of plating menus strive to achieve – both believe that food presentation is a tool to shift our understand of food tradition, with the hopes that this can also expand our taste palate and encourage us to eat food with more variety and nutrition.

As Karen Hess points out, diners have been “out of touch with real food and real cookery for one, two, even three generations. Weaned on junk foods and soda pop, their palates have been numbed;” diners look for foods that are fatty and sugary, protein rich and nutrient poor because this is what the palate has learned to crave instead of fresh fruits and vegetables (Hess 8). Yet Vanderbilt challenges that “we can use vision to learn to like new tastes. There is little evidence that color-flavor relationships are hard wired. We are all born liking sweet things, but we are not born knowing what sweet things look like (Vanderbilt). Cooking composition is a new tool for retraining the eyes and the mouth to crave and enjoy new flavors and culinary experiences.
Plating strategy depends heavily on visual composition, and beyond the use of color as a tool for manipulation and experimentation, plating is also dependent on a set of principles called the Gestalt’s Principles for Visual Organization, along with the amount of exposed plate, the distribution of items on a plate, the spacing between items, the orientation of the plate towards the diner, and the sequence or timing of the plate in the overall scheme of the tasting menu. The Gestalt’s Principles for Visual Organization were determined by a group of German psychologists in the 1920s, which were looking to better understand the world around them. They noticed that the mind did not perceive objects individually, but instead would group objects together using certain patterns; they found that the way the mind perceived and read the whole object was greater than the reading of the individual objects. Laura Busche gives a great example in her piece “Simplicity, Symmetry and More,” where she asks, “think of how your mind automatically perceives the face of a person you know well;” the Gestalt Principles explain how in this moment, the mind perceives the nose, ears, mouth, and eyes as an object (Busche). The principles include the figure-ground principle, the similarity principle, the proximity principle, the continuation principle, the symmetry principle, and the closure principle. Figure-ground describes when an object stands out in contrast from its surrounding, or appears as an object within a field. Similarity is used to describe when objects that have a similar color, texture, size, and form are mentally grouped together and read as a single object, as opposed to a collection of individual objects. The proximity principle describes when objects that are near to one another are read as one object, and the symmetry principle describes when two objects that appear symmetrical or parallel to one another read as one object. The closure principle describes when an object appears continuous, but is interrupted by a plane that interferes with the continuity of the object; however, the object is usually still read as continuous. The close principle describes when an object’s edges are not fully defined, but the mind still reads the object as a single form instead of a collection of forms (Wolfe).
ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGY

Using Gestalt’s principles along with the other principles for understanding plate composition, I considered plates from six of some of the world’s most influential restaurants – El Bulli, Blue Hill, Eleven Madison Park, Atelier Crenn, Attica, and Noma. It was difficult to narrow down the study to six restaurants, but each of the chosen restaurants is known for a unique approach to plating composition; many were listed on the World’s Top 50 Restaurants and have trained many chefs to go out and start their own gastronomic practices. I selected three plates from each restaurant, and then determined which of the Gestalt’s principles were used for the plating, the amount of exposed plate, the spacing and distribution of items, along with the orientation of the plate towards the consumer. Most of the data was gathered from direct observation of plates shown on the restaurants’ website, and there is an opportunity to explore the sequence and timing of the plate within the timeline of the entire menu by speaking with the chefs directly. Using these observations, I then developed and modeled a set of 12 architectural principles that can be used to diagram any dish. The strategies include sprinkle, fold, cover, layer, break, slice, pile, surround, toss, swipe, stuff, and pour; I chose verbs instead of nouns to convey a sense of direction and activity.

The plating of food is linked directly with design strategy, yet forming a connection between food and architecture is largely unprecedented. There are designers that combine flavor and composition with product design, as seen in Shaoqiang Wang’s Food Player: Design with Taste!; in this book, she profiles artists and industrial designers making chocolate pencils and edible plates, or manipulating colors and scents associated with traditional foods to play with the diners sense and perception. However, there is little precedent at the larger scale of architecture. Moving forward, this thesis will apply these architectural and compositional strategies to a design proposal that prioritizes storytelling, narrative, and composition over structural integrity and construction methods. Just like the chefs, I am interested in how composition can tell a story and challenge architectural traditions. I see food consumption and presentation as a powerful, untapped source of information, and if the lessons of plating can be applied to design at the human scale, even if only to tease our imaginations, could we change the way people interact with food in the built environment?
DESIGN PROPOSAL

Moving into the design semester, “Paper Architecture” is the most reasonable form of representation. I am inspired by the work of Jimenez Lai, who wrote a comic book on the architectural profession, creating a series of chapters and world’s for characters to explore and critique. I am also inspired by a thesis called “Wonderland,” which studies the architecture of children’s literature; in the thesis she designs an axon for each story, creates a children’s alphabet book that pairs an architectural principle with a letter, and also proposes a playful, vertical structure that is not contextual but focuses on color and storytelling. Instead of focusing on the built form, these two projects use architecture as a lens for storytelling and narrative, and use nontraditional modes of representation such as a book. In this thesis, I propose creating a set of six architectural recipes, each one using a combination of different compositional strategies found in plating but ultimately all relating to create a new form of architectural cuisine. Imagine looking at an architectural drawing that was derived from plating strategies, used certain colors and tones, and was revealed in such a way as to make the viewer almost taste something. One print could focus use loud, primary colors, similar to one you would find at a fast food restaurant, while the other uses a more minimal, neutral scheme with a pop of color, similar to what a diner might find on a dish at Noma. This form of representation and storytelling has the potential to create a realm where great food is accessible, enjoyable, architectural.


Jurafsky, Dan and Matsumoto, Yoshiko. “How to Read a Menu.” Class lecture, Think 53 Food Talks: The Language of Food, Stanford University, Berkeley, California, April 26 2016.

Jurafsky, Dan and Matsumoto, Yoshiko. “Bourdieu’s Distinction.” Class lecture, Think 53 Food Talks: The Language of Food, Stanford University, Berkeley, California, April 28 2016.


When I first started watching The Chef’s Table, I only had a vague idea that my thesis would somehow relate some food, some nature, and some architecture, but I didn’t have the slightest idea where to start bringing those ideas together. Each episode in the documentary series profiles a chef featured on San Pellegrino’s 50 best restaurant lists, with each restaurant wearing 3 or 4 Michelin stars and holding a top spot on the list for multiple consecutive years. However, this is not just another food show, but rather an expertly crafted story of the chef and their dishes; the show exposes the history of the ingredients and the techniques used for curating tasting menus, and also illustrates how the tasting menus lift the consumer into a new understanding of food, rather than be through altering their sensory experience, teaching them a new way to use an old ingredient, or exposing a new type of cuisine from around the world. This show and the featured chefs will serve as a benchmark for studying gastronomy and how chefs use food to tell a story, whether that be a story of the environment, art, or history. Chefs include Niki Nakayama of n/naka, Magnus Nilsson, Dan Barber, Massimo Bottura, and Grant Achatz.

This book focuses solely on the myriad of ways to play with perception of flavor and tastes, and is really not architectural at all but quite fun and inspiring. It features hundreds of different design products that use food as a material, such as chocolate pencils that can be carved up using a pencil sharpener, 3D printed noodles and cereal, and business cards that must be baked to reveal the contact information. For my research, this book will serve as a refreshing way to reconsider the ways food can exist in our lives; it is not only a source of energy, but a source of inspiration and storytelling that could be expanded more broadly into the architectural realm.


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The Chef’s Table first exposed me to Dan Barber’s careful consideration of the environment and environmental consciousness in gastronomy. His book, The Third Plate: Field Notes on the Future of Food, dives into his food philosophy in greater depth, exploring how the quality of ingredients, and thus the quality of the plate, the American diet, and all of the factors influencing the food system, through the lens of the soil, the land, the sea, and the seed. If you read carefully, much of Barber’s writing exposes a design opportunity, whether architectural or urban, because he sees the design of food and food resources as an opportunity to redefine American consumption patterns. Barber’s book and his work at his restaurant and farm, Blue Hill at Stone Barns, will serve as a resource for agricultural discourse, and how the quality of agriculture affects the shape of taste and consumption.


Outside of the introduction and small descriptive titles, Blanciak’s book “Siteless: 1001 Building Forms” has no words and looks completely different from any other book on architectural theory and discourse. The six chapters are arranged by city, and each chapter holds hundreds of hand drawn, building massing proposals. The prototypes range from simple and completely plausible to complex and structurally impossible. The author points out in the introduction that some of the massings would need to have new construction systems designed to realize the strategy, but challenges the reader to think about why construction methods remain such an obstacle. In the final chapter, Blanciak’s scales up one of the proposals he sketched for Tokyo and tests a model on a chosen site.


Jimenez’s creative take on architectural discourse serves as a guiding example for representational strategy in my thesis. She uses illustrations, architectural drawings, and narrative to tell different stories about the architecture profession; she depicts one scene with a developer in the first chapter, and this character then wakes up in an alternate, digital world that is devoid of architecture, so he attempts to create his own. It criticizes the language that we typically use to talk about architecture, and reminds us that thousands of years from now, the built environment will be the only remaining artifact that can be used to understand our civilization. This graphic novel is a reminder that architecture representation can exist in many forms, and sometimes, smaller vignettes accompanied with a strong narrative can be more successful that a typical building form.


This textbook contains information needed to understand and apply Gestalt’s Rules for Visual Organization to the plating process. It also includes information on the importance of brightness and color, spacing, and edges. These principles were critical components in accurately understanding the compositional strategies used in plating. There is currently little discourse on the visual strategies that making plated food so psychologically successfully, and though this textbook does not cover culinary techniques, it was an essential text to ensure that I was properly documenting and diagramming plates of foods and the effect that composition has on the psychology of the diner.
As one of the recognized experts on the food economy, food policy, and agricultural policy, The Omnivore’s Dilemma is one of many pieces of writings by Michael Pollan that will serve as excellent resources for knowledge on the food system in America. This book first exposed me to the difference between a conventional, organic, and foraged diet, and the inherent advantages and disadvantages to the three typologies. Pollan illustrates how “eating organic,” though often seeming like the smartest choice, can be as damaging as conventional agriculture, and the whole “eat local” movement is only successful if all produce is produced at home or purchased at a local market, and seasonal sacrifices are made. Pollan also helped produce a documentary series that explore the evolution of the food system through soil, water, air, and fire, typologies that might later prove helpful in refining a gastronomical principles as they relate to design and food production.


A Country of Cities is a manifesto not only against urban sprawl, but also a manifesto against the trendy, eco urban renewal that frequently populates architectural discourse. Chakrabarti believes that infrastructure repurposing and small retrofits fail to address the larger policy issues that have influenced development in the past hundred year; instead, he argues that designers should focus on transportation system, creating very dense urban systems that rely on efficient transportation networks, allowing the spaces in between cities to become free again for agricultural use. His book explores the different policies and historic movements, along with their corresponding influences in the media that shaped the American suburban landscape. Chakrabarti’s criticism of the trendy eco-town challenges and serves my thesis proposal; he is critical of the trendy eco-town where architecture and agriculture completely intertwine, but he also advocates for a new urban fabric that frees land immediately adjacent to cities for agricultural use. My thesis proposal will fall somewhere in between, and be critical of projects that only consider how architecture and agriculture can work together instead of considering how architecture and eating can work together.


I discovered this book at the beginning of the spring semester, though I wish I had discovered it sooner. It holds a lot of helpful information on the science of neurogastronomy, and unpacks the complexities of the discipline into easy to understand terms. Spence explores how cutlery, sound, architecture, plates, atmosphere, and more affect the dining experience and the perception of flavor. Spence quantifies and illustrates the many techniques that fine dining restaurants use to encourage diners to eat slower, eat less, eat better, and eat with enjoyment and appreciation, with the hopes that a discussion of these techniques will allow the home diner or diner on a budget to accomplish the same. This thesis aims to convert his research into a informative visual package, while also intertwining the design decisions employed at fast food, fast casual, casual fine, and fine dining restaurants that also have an affect on the way a diner eats. His research shows that the restaurant is no longer just about the food, but about the atmosphere, architecture, and quality of materials that affect the dining experience; if we can truly begin to understand this and apply the lesson of neurogastronomy to all design decisions, then perhaps we can imagine an architecture that is more successfully intertwined with the production and consumption of a meal.

This thesis will explore multiple different mediums to tell the story about the relationship between culinary and architectural composition. Instead of focusing on a prototype that can be constructed, I prefer to use food and dining as a lens to understand the built environment, and to ultimately plan with the viewers’ imagination and taste buds using architectural graphics and illustrations. The program will include proposal for a vertical typology, where people can physically experience the compositional strategies found at fine dining restaurants; however, the proposal will be supplement by prints that zoom into and out from the vertical typology, along with a cookbook of architectural recipes, and ultimately a tasting menu that reflects the architectural and compositional strategy used in the final proposal.
ON THE MENU

Vagelos Education Center, Diller Scofidio + Renfro
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Wonderland - Syracuse Thesis Proposal
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Expo 2000, MVRDV
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Program Proposal
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VAGELOS EDUCATION CENTER

Diller Scofidio + Renfro
New York City, NY
2016

A ribbon of circulation spaces folds along the facade of this building to create a variety of educational and communal spaces.

Columbia’s new Medical School, located in the Washington Heights area of NYC, uses a circulation bar called “study cascade” that vertically weaves along the south side of the building. This bar alternates includes stair cases that expand to become auditoriums, and landings that grow to house educational and social spaces. This building is sectionally strong, and the vertical manipulation of program is very interesting to me and applicable to application of this thesis’ programmatic elements. The diagram 1.1 highlights all of the various breakout spaces, and shows them in relationship to the more rigid, structured, north side of the building, which is reserved for classrooms and offices. I especially appreciate how the circulation bar unfolds onto the ground floor and begins to interact with the landscape. The use of the bright orange color is also a successful way finding strategy, allowing the user to find clarity as she circulates through the building.

01, 02, 03 http://www.archdaily.com/793971/roy-and-diana-vagelos-education-center-diller-scofidio-plus-renfro
04 image: domusweb.it, diagram by author
INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

STUDY CRASHER
A study area for students to work individually and in groups. The area is designed to provide a quiet environment for focused study.

SPECIALIZED SPACES
Various specialized spaces for different activities, such as art, music, and research.

Sky Lounge
An elevated outdoor lounge area for students to relax and socialize.

Exterior Courtyard
A large outdoor space for events and gatherings.

Library
A well-lit area for reading and studying.

Common Area
Spaces shared by multiple departments, such as conference rooms and break areas.

Folding Educational and Common Spaces
The building design allows for flexible use of spaces, with the ability to fold or unfold areas as needed.

Floorplate
The layout of the building, showing how different spaces are arranged on each floor.

common area
folding
floorplate

03

04
Wonderland

Jessica Ordaz-Garcia and Stephanie Tager, Authors
Syracuse University, New York
2016

A creative application of the architecture of children's literature to a variety of programmatic approaches.

Jess and Stephanie’s project has constantly intrigued me on many levels; the graphic representation is colorful and engaging, and I appreciate how they presented their proposal using a series of playful vignettes and a children’s book. The children’s book, shown in the top two images on the right, illustrates the architectural that they found, with each principle assigned a letter in the alphabet. They also illustrated the principles as short stories, shown in the top image. In the bottom image, the stories were expanded into sectional strategies. The depth of application of their research tells maintains a strong, playful narrative. Free from the constraints of construction methods and assembly systems, they are able to fool with our imagination and approach architectural discourse from a variety of mediums.

architectural ingredients
layer
sprinkle

01 - 03 “Wonderland” http://superarchitects.world/portfolio/wonderland/
UNTIL IT POPS!

01

YOU'RE THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER

02

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU TIRES

03

THE FLOOR IS LAVA!

04

BREEZE IN, BUST OUT

Smooth transitions between public and private spaces

05
EXPO 2000

*MVRDV*

*Hanover, Germany*

*2000*

*A new form of stacked ecologies that creates a vertical urban landscape.*

This building is the Netherlands Pavilion for an expo in Germany in 2000. In the Netherlands, there a high regard for nature, but not a ton of space, so MVRDV used the expo as an opportunity to explore a new architectural typology of stacked natural landscapes. The sectional strategy was largely inspired by the structure of a hamburger with all of the toppings, shown in the top image to the left. The pavilion remained active for a while, and has recently fallen to disrepair. The project walks the line between built form and architectural representation; it is highly playful and diagrammatic in elevation and in section, but it’s temporary nature makes it seem more like a built diagram than a truly functional building. This project, the first of its kind, proves that new typologies and relationships with the built environment can alter architectural discourse, because in the years after this project, many other proposals expanded on the idea of vertical landscapes and ecologies.

*architectural ingredients*

*stuff layer fold*  

01 - 03 [https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/expo](https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/expo)
THIS IS OUR
GARBAGE
BURGER
IT HOLDS JUST ABOUT
EVERYTHING
YUM

THIS IS OUR
2000 DUTCH
PAVILION
IT HOLDS JUST ABOUT
EVERYTHING
YAY!
Focusing on the significance of paper architecture and architectural representation, this thesis will explore four types of programmatic strategies. First, I will develop a set of six architectural vignettes of various scales that speak to the power of composition in plating and in architecture. These vignettes will be derived directly from the compositional and architectural strategies found in my research, and each will illustrate a way to apply plating composition to architecture. Ultimately, the vignettes will create playful worlds that intrigue the eye, engage the viewer, and challenge our understanding of the built environment. These vignettes and stories can then be assembled as a vertical strategy, creating a new vertical architectural typology that is as delicious as it is functional. Similar to the project “Nest We Grow,” the vertical typology will include space for all of the processes needed to create a meal while also challenging our relationship with architecture and agriculture; there will be common elements, such as grazing areas and gardens, and then the vignettes created in phase one will act as sectional moments to experience different styles of composition. Next, I will create a set of architectural recipes, displayed in the form of a cookbook; this will act as a user manual for understanding the built environment through the lens of food. Finally, I will develop a tasting menu that speaks to the chosen vignettes, and the compositional overlap between architecture and gastronomy. Together, these four programmatic pieces will act in tandem to challenge the relationship between food and architecture and frame what dining could look like in the future; the four pieces and the presentation will rely on the senses used in gustation - taste, smell, sound, and sight - to create a new style of architectural discourse that uses food as a lens for understanding.
PART 1: INGREDIENT MATRIX (24” X 36” PRINTS)

01 FAST FOOD, FAST ARCHITECTURE
A commentary on the current relationship between the built environment and dining, specifically on fast food culture and urban sprawl. Will use loud, primary colors and pop-art graphic styles as a tool for representation.

02 THE RISE OF PLATING
This illustration will expose how chefs use plating to respond to traditional dining culture, which is based on efficiency and quantity. Will use a gradient to reveal the compositional, culinary differences found at each end of the dining spectrum.

03 CULINARY + ARCHITECTURAL MINIMALISM
This illustration will critique the minimalism found in the plating strategies of fine dining restaurants, which focuses solely on quality over quantity.

04 CULINARY FORM AS PHYSICAL SPACE
This illustration will apply the architectural strategies found in my research to a depiction of the built environment at the urban scale

05 CULINARY FORM AS PHYSICAL SPACE
This illustration will apply the architectural strategies found in my research to a depiction of the built environment at the human scale

06 BUILDINGS YOU CAN EAT
As a conclusion to the vignette series, this print will playfully imagine a built environment that engages all gustatory senses - taste, smell, sound, and most importantly, sight.

PART 02: VERTICAL TYPOLOGY

COMMON ELEMENTS
Garden (Fruits, Vegetables, Herbs, and Flowers) 10,000 sf
Grazing commons 20,000 sf
Circulation core (30% of total) 13,350 sf
Mechanical/Service (7% of total) 3,000 sf

VIGNETTES AS SECTIONAL MOMENTS
01 “Fast Food, Fast Architecture” 3,500 sf
02 “The Rise of Plating” 5,000 sf
03 “Culinary and Architectural Minimalism” 2,000 sf
04 “Culinary Form as Physical Space: Urban Scale” (shown in site plan)
05 “Culinary Form as Physical Space: Human Scale” 4,000 sf
06 “Buildings You Can Eat” (shown in building materiality) 60,830 sf

PART 03: RECIPE CARDS
This will include a short user manual that introduces the diner to the architectural and compositional elements found in my research, and then will include the “recipes,” or the combinations of these strategies, that were used to create the vignettes and the tasting menu.

6 dishes that pair with the 6 vignettes; the dishes will represent the compositional and architectural strategies used to create the illustration, while also enhancing the understanding of the graphic by engaging the other gustatory senses (sound, smell, taste).

PART 03: TASTING MENU
**Spatial Organization of Program in Section**

All diagrams by author

This process diagram explores the sectional relationships that could be found between the compositional strategies of the different restaurants; areas that share a common strategy could become double or triple height common spaces, whereas the rest of the floor plate would read as an individual experience of that restaurant’s compositional approach to plating.

This diagram explores a similar sectional relationship, where restaurants and their compositional strategies are stacked and form exterior and interior spaces. When two restaurants share an architectural or compositional strategy, a new common space is formed that connects the restaurants.
This diagram focuses on three different chefs and their precise plating menus. The composition of the plating menu is applied to the circulation, creating three different paths to experience the typology. Each plate in the sequence is represented by a room, and when two rooms have a similarity in compositional strategy, the paths of circulation cross to create a common area, marked with a white dot. The typology also responds to different user groups by curating an individual experiences based on the amount of time the user has on site, ranging from 30 minutes to three hours.

This diagram is another iteration and study of how a tasting menu could translate into a sectional strategy. As opposed to the diagram to the left, in this proposal, the paths of circulation remain straight, with each floor representing three different composition strategies (one from each chef). Whenever there is a similarity between plates, a bridge is formed to create a common area.
COMPOSITION

the visual arrangements of physical and non-physical form; can be measured and analyzed using Gestalt’s Principles for Visual Organization and color theory

GESTALT’S PRINCIPLES

a group of rules to better understand visual organization and the world around us; believes that the organization of the whole object is visual processed before the organization of individual objects. These principles were developed by a group of German psychologists and govern design disciplines to this day

CONTRAST

when two objects differ from one another in color, texture, size, or form so that they are visually processed separately

MATERIALITY

a property used to describe an object’s tactile and visual texture

TEXTURE

a property used to describe how an object feels to the touch or the pattern of an object read from a distance

COLOR

a property used to describe how much light is reflected or emitted from an object; can affect the perceived gustation of a food and can also determine how graphics are read and visually processed

COLOR THEORY

seeks to understand the psychological effects that color has on the reader; can be applied to many design disciplines in order to tell a story or make the reader feel a certain way

ORIENTATION

how an object is placed in a field in order to curate an experience for the viewer

MOLECULAR GASTRONOMY

a movement founded by Ferran Adria at El Bulli in the 1960’s; combines cooking with chemistry to reinvent traditional forms of foods. Techniques include “spherification” and “culinary form”

SEQUENCE

the use of circulation and timing to curate a path for the viewer

SITE

the field that the object is set against

REPRESENTATION

when the built environment is abstracted and represented diagrammatically; techniques include illustration, story telling, and graphic design. In architecture, representation and composition allow the freedom to focus on the narrative of the design instead of the technicalities of construction

GUSTATION

the different senses that affect the flavor of food, including smell, sound, sight, and taste. The visual cortex is responsible for over fifty percent of perceived gustation, whereas the sense of taste is governs only two percent.
In the fall semester, I focused on studying some of the most well-respected restaurants in the world; the chefs in these kitchens are trend setters for the culinary world, and I considered them to be the architects of food because of how successfully they told stories with flavor. However, when I transitioned into the spring design semester, I needed to expand the scope of my research to include other dining options, in order to make a design proposal that was well-grounded, informed, and able to operate within a larger architectural discourse.

I began to study the ways that architecture affected dining behavior, patterns, and environments in a range of restaurants, and cataloged my research into five different categories of study based on the amount of time a diner would spend inside the restaurant ordering food and eating the meal. 0-10 minutes quantified fast-food restaurants, 10-30 minutes illustrated fast casual, 30-60 minutes represented casual fine, 60-90 minutes defined fine dining, and 90-120 minutes defined the fine dining, Michelin-starred restaurants where I focused my research in the fall. For each category, I applied six lenses of architectural analysis, including an analysis of the typical surrounding context, access to resources, spatial organization, sequence of ordering and dining, and presentation of the food, as well as a “lagniappe” section that diagrammed conditions that didn’t apply within the other five lenses for analysis. This research was visually cataloged and illustrated into the matrix of ingredients you will see on the following pages.

Then, I took began to apply the architecture of multiple ingredients to create a set of architectural “entrees.” These entrees represent three new dining typologies that are inspired by qualities found in fast food and in fine dining, but thrive in the gray area in between the two ends of the dining spectrum. They aim to slow down the diner and to more closely integrate the production of a meal with the dining table. The entrees included a typology for a rural setting, a suburban setting, and an urban setting.

Throughout the semester, I remained very inspired by the drawing by MOS Architects that I featured in my case studies. Similar to MOS Architects’ approach, the drawings that I created for this thesis aim to be multivalent in their ambiguity. I do not hope to express that one type of dining is better or worse than another; instead, I use whimsical representation in order to remove a sense of bias, allowing the viewer of the drawings to draw their own conclusions and create their own narratives that populate the architecture. These drawings rely on imagination, memory, and emotion both to realize the truths of the current dining environment and to entertain possibilities for the future.
SUMMARY OF FALL SEMESTER RESEARCH
An Introduction to Culinary History and Dining Processes

INGREDIENT MATRIX

| 01A CONTEXT | "I'm hungry, are we there yet?" |
| 01B RESOURCES | "It's about quantity, not quality" |
| 01C ORGANIZATION | "Do you think it'll be faster to just go inside?" |
| 01D PATTERN | "Would you like to make it a combo for another $1?" |
| 01E PRESENTATION | "Would you like any sauce?" |
| 01F LADNAPPE | "If I always get the number three" |
| 02A CONTEXT | "I am looking for something that is quick but healthy" |
| 02B RESOURCES | "It's about quality and quantity" |
| 02C ORGANIZATION | "This place always hits the spot" |
| 02D PATTERN | "Great going to be eaten" |
| 02E PRESENTATION | "Would you mind grabbing some more napkins?" |
| 02F LADNAPPE | "Well, I need to get a picture first" |
| 03A CONTEXT | "Let's try something different tonight!" |
| 03B RESOURCES | "We work closely with local, seasonal farmers" |
| 03C ORGANIZATION | "The bar is available for sitting" |
| 03D PATTERN | "I bet there was no right in front of you!" |
| 03E PRESENTATION | "Let's order some appetizers for the table!" |
| 03F LADNAPPE | "They have so many vegan options here!" |
| 04A CONTEXT | "I've heard great things about this new place!" |
| 04B RESOURCES | "The farmer market is the one place to shop for produce!" |
| 04C ORGANIZATION | "Did you know that used to be an old foundry?" |
| 04D PATTERN | "Your Reservation Is At 6 Pm For 4 People" |
| 04E PRESENTATION | "Tonight we will be serving an appetizer and two entrees!" |
| 04F LADNAPPE | "From what I've heard it's definitely worth the wait" |
| 05A CONTEXT | "The restaurant is kind of off of the beaten path" |
| 05B RESOURCES | "We support fresh ingredients and renewable energy" |
| 05C ORGANIZATION | "You will be dining in the dining room this evening!" |
| 05D PATTERN | "We prefer to seat guests in small, intimate settings" |
| 05E PRESENTATION | "Tonight's dinner is based on current events in history!" |
| 05F LADNAPPE | "It hasn't seen this technique used here before!" |

URBAN MAP

ENTREE DRAWINGS
Rural Typology
Suburban Typology
Urban Typology
Ultimately, the thesis is an exploration in architectural storytelling and narrative; it is grounded in a deep interest for meaningful ways, oftentimes leaving the strategies for visual organization. In order to study the dish as an object, the plate must also be set down with a precise way in order to tell the story of the dish. This leads to the phsyical world around us. The site allows her to create a path and strategies for visual organizaiton. In order to occupy the site in a rigorous manner, the brightness and color of the object is not physically continuous, against its background. Figure-ground law, similarity law, and closure law; I will also consider the figure-ground law, similarity law, and closure law during the implementation of spatial analysis as well as different restaurant typologies to create three architectural "entrees." These entrees are of spatial analysis as well as different restaurant typologies to create three architectural "entrees." These entrees are scaled to fit into any context or climate, and can also be manipulated to reflect and celebrate different culinary traditions. The six-volumen Modernist Cuisine is the father of molecular gastronomy, which includes quickly responding to changes in climate and trends. These three entrees can be scaled to fit into any context or climate, and can also be manipulated to reflect and celebrate different culinary traditions.
Eleven Madison strategies can also be applied to paper architecture and consumer inspiration to see food in a new way. These principles must be taken into consideration when assembling the flavor, or “perceived gustation,” of the food. The distribution of items on the plate along the plate, the orientation of the plate and the timing of the amount of exposed plate, the structure of the composition can be analyzed using a number of tools for understanding the architecture of plating and the flow of the tasting menu. This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating. This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating. This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating.

Under her reign, modern plating took root in dining traditions in France, where the focus was on the presentation and visual appeal of dishes rather than just the taste. This brought plating into the modern world...arguably the first modern restaurant was L'Arpege, which merged culinary traditions with the visual arts. The chef Alice Waters is one of the earliest proponents of this approach, as her restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkeley, 1971, was known for its artistic plating and the use of fresh, local ingredients. Waters' approach was part of a larger movement that brought a focus on seasonal and sustainable ingredients to the forefront of dining. She believed that food was not just a means to satisfy hunger, but also a form of art, a way to express creativity and tell a story through the presentation of the dish.

This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating. This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating. This principle describes when you perceive an object as standing out if a sense of direction is implied. This principle states that even if an object is small or a different color, if a sense of direction is implied, it will be perceived as an object that is floating.

The length of the tasting menu at studied restaurants ranged from 20 minutes to 120 minutes. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate. The length of the menu at L'Ambroisie, which was opened in 1965, was significant to the passing of the plate and the amount of exposure of the plate.
**INGREDIENT MATRIX**

These ingredients are a distillation of current spatial conditions in five different restaurant typologies. The five typologies were decided based on the average amount of time a diner would spend within the establishment, both in ordering and eating a meal. The following notes the color assignments:

- 0-10 minutes, fast food, orange
- 10-30 minutes, fast casual, pink
- 30-60 minutes, casual fine, purple
- 60-90 minutes, fine, blue
- 90-120 minutes, Michelin starred, green

Each typology is analyzed based on context, access to resource, spatial organization, sequence, and presentation, as well as for other spatial quirks that define typical spaces within the typology.
0 - 10 MINUTES

These restaurants are most frequently referred to as “fast food,” and more often than not, their spatial organization does not require the diner to leave their car. Diners can simple exit the highway and with one lap around the restaurant, they can order a meal and receive it within minutes. The menus remain the same from season to season and from year to year, with an introduction of a new entree every once in a while as trends from the 60 - 90 minute typology and 90 - 120 minute typology find their way into the fast food and home dining environment. These restaurants are typically located along highways and in less urban areas, though they can always be found in densely packed cities as well. They prioritize quantity over quality, meaning that they supply the diner with a lot of food instead of a smaller portion of better quality food. As a result of this mentality of quantity and speed, and due to the vast number of Americans that depend on these establishments as dining options during a cross country road trip or during the quick commute to work, these restaurants are fueled by farms that are located far from the location of the restaurant and grow produce in what is called a “monoculture.” Produce is frozen and sent in on 18 wheelers that unload their goods daily. When the diner enters the space, the inner working of the restaurant are hidden; there is little to no awareness as to where the food came from and how it was prepared. The need for speed and efficiency defines the position of these restaurants within their context, as well as the spatial organization and access to resources.
10 - 30 MINUTES

Restaurants in this time category are referred to as “fast casual” establishments. They can sometimes accommodate drive-thru dining, but they usually encourage the diner to leave their car and order and eat inside by providing a more unique interior dining experience as well as outdoor seating options. The restaurants value quality and quantity, and often advertise that they are using fresh ingredients that are not necessarily local or organic. Many ingredients are still hauled in from a distant location, and this typology is still fueled by monoculture farming practices due to need for speed and efficient. Sometimes the restaurants include a buffet line that allows the diner to more directly customize their order. The kitchen is usually partially exposed so that the diner gains a sense of awareness as to where the food comes from and how it is prepared. Upon entry, the diner is walked by other diners that have already ordered food, a design move that enhances the diners perception of flavor and anticipation.
This restaurant typology can take on many forms, but for the sake of this thesis, they will be referred to as “casual-fine” dining establishments. These restaurants vary in price point and quality of experience. They can fall closer to the realm of “fast-casual,” or they can appear more like “fine” dining restaurants that keep diners from 60 - 90 minutes. These restaurants usually introduce multiple courses in the meal, which can include an appetizer, and entree, and a dessert. The dishes can be delivered in sequential order or all at once. There is no drive through option, but take out is available. A variety of seating options are available to accommodate groups of different sizes, as well as the introduction of a bar area that diners can enjoy. The kitchen area is usually exposed and the preparation activities are audible from the dining room, which increases the diners’ awareness of how the food is prepared. There is an increasing emphasis on quality over quantity, and restaurant might work with local farmers and producers to supply certain items on the menu. Some of the restaurants might have a small urban farm adjacent to the establishment. These restaurants can also easily accommodate dietary restrictions and preferences, something that restaurant in the 0 - 10 minute category and 10 - 30 minute category can struggle to accommodate financially. Also, restaurants within this category participate and fuel the “foodies craze” - they adopt trends and create their own, and can use social media to fuel their popularity and gain a following. These restaurants are a bridge between the expensive practices used at finer dining restaurants and the efficiency of a fast food restaurant.
**60 - 90 Minutes**

Restaurants in this category will be considered “fine” dining for this thesis. They are usually located within urban environments, and they offer unique menus that change seasonally to reflect produce that is available in the area. More often than not, they work with local farmers and producers to create a set of dishes. Diners here will order multiple courses, including an appetizer, multiple entrees, and dessert, all of which will be accompanied by drinks. These establishments create a more intimate, unique, and private dining environment. There is usually only one of its kind, whereas the shorter restaurant typologies can exist as a chain restaurant or as multiple establishments within a city. These restaurants are popular, and participate in the “foodie culture” similarly to the 30 - 60 minute typology. The kitchen is exposed and frenetic, this increasing a diner’s awareness of the source and preparation of their food. Sometimes the restaurants are located next to a garden or a farm, allowing for direct access to fresh produce. These restaurants are more expensive because they value quantity over quantity. They are limited in the number of people that they can feed each evening, though people are able to come and go throughout the day to dine here. There is a bar at these restaurants, though diners are not usually allowed to dine at the bar directly.
90 - 120 MINUTES

These restaurants are some of the most expensive and well-respected in the world, as noted by the fact that they have received a “Michelin Star.” The Michelin Guide recognizes restaurants that are creating trends and testing new ideas in the kitchen; the chefs at these restaurants are changing the ways that diners perceive flavor and ingredients.

In these restaurants, courses are usually served from a fixed menu in a carefully curated order, with certain dishes and flavors being served before or after others in order to create a specific journey of flavor. Dishes are served with individual drinks, and the price at the end reflects this attention to detail. The kitchens always work directly with local farms, and the menus can change by the day to reflect the availability of local produce. The dining rooms can usually only accommodate a small number of people, and diners are seated in stages throughout the evening so that the dishes all arrive at the same time. The kitchen can either be completely exposed or completely hidden; the diners already have an awareness of the quality of the produce, and so a concealed kitchen creates a level of mystery that can heighten the flavor of a dish when it finally arrives on the table. These restaurant destinations and take reservations year in advance; they are one of a kind, and can be found in very rural or very urban settings. Just like with fashion, the techniques discovered in these kitchens and tested with diners eventually find their way into the home dining and fast food dining environment.
It's about quantity, not quality.
Monoculture farms and highway infrastructure define the dining environment of fast food. Historically speaking, restaurants like McDonald’s and Popeye’s speak to the hearts and stomachs of American consumers by prioritizing quantity over quality, and speed of preparation over quality of preparation. The demands of fast food dining culture requires farms to produce surpluses of a small set of ingredients, including corn, beef, and potatoes. These ingredients are grown in large scale across wide swaths of the country, and then efficiently packaged up during peak season and delivered to other parts of the country as a frozen good that can be heated before serving to a diner. The NY Times article titled “Super Size - The Dizzying Grandeur of 21st Century Agriculture” exposes the rigid, efficient system for growing and transporting the goods that fuel fast food dining typologies. If we were to see inside the cabs of eighteen wheeler trucks as they travel across America, we would see many trucks carrying baby carrots and sliced potatoes from California to New York, and lobster from Maine back to Washington. As shown in ingredient 01A, at these establishments diners do not need to leave their car to enjoy a meal; they travel alongside the trucks that are carrying produce and goods, make a quick turn off the highway to the nearest drive thru, and within ten minutes they have a meal in their hands. The issue of Log 34 notes that “how we grow crops, treat soil, and feed cattle is a reflection of the current workings of many intersecting industries, with huge implications in defining our time and shaping the future of the environments of which we live” (Log, 10). It is interesting to see how much the highway has defined our food experiences and how the world’s resources are used, while also entertaining new possibilities and hybrids for car-driven dining.

For further reading: “Super Size - The Dizzying Grandeur of 21st Century Agriculture” on the NY Times
I'm hungry, ARE WE THERE YET?

context

I always get the number three

lagniappe

WOULD YOU LIKE ANY KETCHUP?

PRESENTATION

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE IT A COMBO FOR ANOTHER $1?

SEQUENCE

do you think it'll be faster to just go inside?

ORGANIZATION

it's about quantity, not quality

RESOURCES

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT IS QUICK BUT HEALTHY

CONTEXT

wait, i need to get a picture first!

lagniappe

would you mind grabbing some extra napkins?

PRESENTATION

it's about quality and quantity

resources

GUAC IS GOING TO BE EXTRA

SEQUENCE

this place always hits the spot

ORGANIZATION

we work closely with local, urban farms

RESOURCES

the bar is available for seating

CONTEXT

LET'S TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT TONIGHT!
02D

SEQUENCE

“GUAC IS GOING TO BE EXTRA”

Restaurant examples: Chipotle, Panera

Restaurants in this category (02A - 02F) are typically called “fast casual.” The dining experience is just as fast as fast food, but the menu items are prepared to your order and are often prepared with higher quality ingredients. Diners typically spend about 10 to 30 minutes in these restaurants. When we look at the sequence and spatial organization of a fast casual restaurant in comparison to the that of the fast food or casual fine dining typology, it is interesting to note the relationship of the diner to the kitchen and to the dining area. In this ingredient, you see that the diner walks past other tables of diners before approaching the line to order, which begins to build up anticipation and desire for certain flavors. The kitchen and prep areas are also visible from the ordering line, which leads the diner to believe that the food is fresh and this of higher quality.

The sequence and organization of a restaurant helps to illustrate a restaurant’s culinary priorities. The kitchen can be exposed or hidden, the diner could have to wait in a small room before her table is ready, or there might be a view to the outside in the dining room. These architectural relationships help to tell a story about the restaurant, but also provide opportunities to tell a story about the chef and the food. They can enhance the experience of eating or detract from it.

For further reading: “What You Can Learn from the Simple Brilliance of Chipotle’s Design” on entrepreneur.com
Let’s order some appetizers for the table.
Restaurant examples: Willa Jean, Shaya

The idea of a tasting menu and sequence of dishes is perhaps what first inspired me most to pursue this thesis. In fine dining restaurants, dishes are presented in a very specific order, one that depends on a sequence of temperature, flavor, color, and size. Sometimes, these tasting menus can last up to 30 courses, and though they are often very expensive, they do slow the diner down and encourage the diner to perceive distinct flavors. These tasting sequences sometimes employ the surrounding architecture and atmosphere to enhance the flavor of the dish, suggest a certain interpretation of the dish, or to encourage the diner to recall memories of childhood or travel. Either way, “performative meals raise one’s consciousness about eating,” and lead the diner to a greater understanding of flavor use of ingredients.

The sequence and presentation of dishes becomes less and less complex as you work your way towards fast-casual and fast-food, which are usually served all at once in a compact package. In casual-fine restaurants, various entrees and appetizers set at the same time or left throughout the meal help to loosen the sequence of eating; in fine dining restaurants diners are encouraged to order an appetizer, entrees, and dessert, which are delivered in a specific order. The presentation of food is an important variable to consider in an effort to create new dining environments that merge trends found in different restaurant typologies.

For further reading: *The Perfect Meal* by Charles Spence
Let's order some appetizers for the table! They have so many fantastic vegan options there!

I love how they cook it right in front of you!

I’ve heard great things about this new place.

Did you know that this used to be an old firehouse? Did you know that this used to be an old firehouse?

Tonight’s dinner is based on seven moments in history.

We support free range practices and renewable energy.

We prefer to seat the guests in small, intimate settings.

You will be dining in the Davidson Room this evening.

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS USED TO BE AN OLD FIREHOUSE?
The spatial organization of a restaurant allows us to understand relationships between the diner and the chef and between the space for eating and the space for preparation. As you work your way from 01C to 05C, you will find that the kitchen goes from a place that is hidden to one that is exposed, and sometimes in the fine dining restaurants you will see a return to a private kitchen. An exposed kitchen gives the diner more information on how the food is prepared, where the food comes from, and other processes that go into the assembly of a meal. Kitchens in the fast food category are often small and compact, and they tend to grow in size as you work your way to the fine dining category because meal assembly requires more steps. Michael Gibney’s “24 hours on the Line” illustrates the kitchen dynamic found in fine dining restaurants; these kitchens must respond to new ingredients each day, multiple different types of meals and seating styles, and the responsibility of serving more than one course. Interestingly, restaurants in the fine dining category often use concealment to heighten the flavor and experience of the dish. By hiding the kitchen again, but earning a diner’s trust that the food is of high quality and excellent preparation, these kitchens “excite a spark of curiosity in the adventurous diner when done right. This way, the arrival of the food presents a revelation to the diner, and the experience of finally decrypting the menu through actual ingestion allows for a welcome degree of what we call audience participation” (Gibney 54).

Because of the spatial organization of fast food restaurants, the element of surprise decreases, and the perception of dynamic flavor might decrease over time. This is also due to the consistency of fast food restaurants to deliver the same product during all seasons at all times of day, despite local or seasonal availability of a product. As we study restaurants that serve diners for longer periods of time, we see shifts in distance and exposure between the diner and the chef, as well as a decrease in the consistency of menu offerings.

For further reading: 24 Hours on the Line by Michael Gibney
This restaurant is kind of off the beaten path.
In this ingredient, you see that the restaurant is more of a destination, or a metaphorical object within a field. Many of the world’s best restaurants are directly situated within an urban context, but even then, there is an sense that you have reached a new destination and are within a new atmosphere when you dine in these restaurants. These restaurants are also deeply rooted within the local ingredients available – though they make not be based their cuisine on local culture and culinary tradition, they are dependent on local farmers to supply fresh, high quality ingredients that change daily and throughout the seasons.

Unlike the site for fast food and fast casual, which are located along highways and strip malls and have a very standard, non varying architectural form, these restaurants introduce a unique dining experience and atmosphere. Here, it is not just about the food, but rather the “pleasure in savoring a meal resides in the quality, freshness, and seasonality of the ingredients and how they have been prepared” as well as “the tablecloths, the feel of the cutlery, the name of the dish and the atmosphere and the ambience” (Spence 22). These restaurants depend the flavor of the food as well as all other elements that contribute to the dining atmosphere in order to enhance the dining experience. Though fast food and fast casual restaurants do focus on creating a specific dining experience, their motive is a dining experience that is familiar and dependable. As you observe some of the other restaurant typologies for their spatial organization as well as their context, you will see that the architecture of the fine dining restaurants draws the diner farther away from the car and into a more immersive and curated dining experience.

For further reading: Log Issue 34
Let's order some appetizers for the table. Presentations.

- Vegan
- Vegetarian
- Paleo
- Lactose sensitive
- Sugar free
- Gluten free

They have so many fantastic vegan options there!

Lagniappe.

I love how they cook it right in front of you!

I've heard great things about this new place.

Sequence.

Tonight we will be serving an appetizer and two entrees.

I've heard it's definitely worth the wait!

Context.

Did you know that this used to be an old firehouse?

Organization.

Tonight's dinner is based on seven moments in history.

Resources.

We support free range practices and renewable energy.

We prefer to seat the guests in small, intimate settings.

You will be dining in the Davidson Room this evening.

I haven't seen this technique used here before.

Casual

Fast

Kitchen

Fine

Fusion

Fine

East

Fine

Fine

Fine

Fine

Fine

Fine
My research in the fall focused solely on modernist cuisine and neurogastronomy found at some of the world’s finest, and most expensive, restaurants. In these kitchens, chefs used techniques such as spherification and culinary foam to create new textures and flavors, and they work with the highest quality ingredients to create dishes that are difficult to replicate in another setting. The dishes at NOMA, elBulli, and Blue Hill at Stone Barns provided inspiration and information for understanding the architecture of plating; their work set the framework for developing a set of architectural toolkit and language for analyzing modernist cuisine.

Though the restaurants where I focused my studies in the fall are inaccessible most people due to location and price point, their culinary influence can be traced all the way through casual-fine, fast-casual, and fast-food dining typologies. As noted by Charles Spence in The Perfect Meal, these restaurants “provide the perfect verve for new culinary ideas coming from the field of gastrophysics. What happens in the top-end restaurant provides the ideal test-bed for culinary innovation” (Spence 22). Similar to fashion, techniques and trends that are set within the walls of haute cuisine do find their way onto your plate at Chipotle and Applebee’s. Many fine dining restaurants have test kitchens or labs, and “the insights that will be uncovered there can hopefully be applied wherever we happen to eat and no matter what we happen to be eating” (Spence 7). Though I still see these fine dining restaurants as spaces that are financially inaccessible and exclusive, the imagination and resources of the chefs allows for new strategies of dining to emerge, whether in the actual atmosphere of the dining room or in the combination of flavors on the plate. This is an exciting opportunity, and a moment this thesis aims to build on through the creation of new dining typologies that are inspired but critical of the tradition and ritual of standard restaurant typologies.

For further reading: “How Trends Trickle Down” on the Lucky Peach
ENTREE DRAWINGS

The drawings combine multiple different ingredients from different restaurant typologies as well as categories for spatial analysis to create didactic new dining conditions. The typologies include a rural typology, a suburban typology, and an urban typology.
RURAL TYPOLOGY

The rural typology combines inspiration from the highway driven culture associated with fast food, where people rarely leave their cars to eat and trucks line the highway filled with produce from across the country, with different seating and kitchen trends found in fast-casual, casual-fine, and fine dining settings. The trucks redefine “farm to table” dining by allowing the user to travel from farm to their destination while enjoying a meal.

01A + 04C + 02B + 02E
SUBURBAN TYPOLOGY

This typology combines lessons from fast-casual dining with the more rigid spatial structure found in fine dining restaurants, which often have multiple rooms for diners. It reinterprets the structure of a multi course meal by creating different rooms for different entrees. Thresholds between each room allow the diner to create their own dining path, which can be adjusted based on cravings as well as the amount of time the diner has to enjoy their meals.

02A + 05C + 03E
The urban typology distills a chef’s tasting menu into vertical structure, one that includes a floor for each process used to create a dish as well as individual dining rooms specifically curated to enhance the flavor of the dish. This structure is loosely based on six dishes from Massimo Bottura’s restaurant in Modena, Italy. The typology combines elements from the presentation and resources of fine dining with the context of fast casual and casual fine.

04A + 03B + 05E + 02E