

Art, Food, and the Social and Meliorist Goals of Somaesthetics

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Abstract: *In his somaesthetics, Richard Shusterman emphasizes, to a much greater degree than other contemporary pragmatists, the importance of corporality for all aspects of human existence. He focuses particularly on “the critical study and cultivation of how the living body (or soma) is used as the site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-stylization.”*¹

*Somaesthetics is grounded as an interdisciplinary project of theory and practice. Many in the academic field have asked Richard Shusterman why he has not included “the art of eating” in his somaesthetics. He recently decided to do this and he has held lectures on this subject in Italy with the title *The Art of Eating. L’Art di mangiare* at the conference *Food, Philosophy and Art - CIBO, Filosofia e Arte, Convergence Pollenzo*, April 4-5, 2013 in collaboration with students from the University of Gastronomic Sciences. He has opened a new field, which is discussed in this article.*

The main subject of this article on visual art and eating will be a presentation of the internationally renowned Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, who has created many surprising installations in Thailand, other countries in the east, Europe and particularly the US, where he resides and is professor at Columbia University. His installations often take the form of stages or rooms for sharing meals, cooking, reading and playing music. The architecture or other structures he uses always form the framework for different social events. His work is fundamentally about bringing people together. Also a project Rirkrit Tiravanija created with his Danish friends in the group SUPERFLEX will be described.

I will also analyse the projects of other artists who have worked with the relationship between art and the art of eating or food, such as the Korean artist Yeonju Sung, the Chinese artist Song Dongand, the English artist Prudence Emma Staite and the Swiss-German artist Dieter Roth.

Keywords: *somaesthetics, interdisciplinary, corporality, the art of eating, meliorist goal, performing art, relational orientation, community, Fluxus*

In his somaesthetics, Richard Shusterman highlights - far more than other contemporary pragmatists - the importance of corporality for all aspects of human existence. In both philosophy and art, he aims for the realization of “the aesthetic experience of collaborative creation, and even the cognitive gains from exploring new practices that provoke new sensations, spur new energies and attitudes, and thus probe one’s current limits and perhaps transcend them to transform the self.”²

The notion of holism is central to his aesthetics. It is “an orientation toward seeing things in terms of continuities rather than dualisms. We have already noted continuities between body

1 Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 144.

2 See the catalogue for the exhibition *Aesthetic Transactions. Pragmatist Philosophy through Art and Life*, curated by Richard Shusterman, Galerie Michel Journiac. Paris, May 24 to June 6, 2012, p. 29.

and mind, nature and culture, theory and practice. But the continuities of common sense and scientific inquiry, science and art, thought and feeling, ethics and aesthetics are also salient in pragmatism.”³

Shusterman has always focused on social practice and political experimentation, emphasizing that truth must be relative to specific social contexts and practices. He is also convinced that philosophy can and must solve practical and social problems. Realizing this goal has always been a leitmotif in the development of his pragmatist aesthetics.⁴

Somaesthetics is not just a particular field of study, it is also a methodical physical exercise grounded in an ever-expanding interdisciplinary project of theory and praxis. Shusterman never neglects to work with new challenges and engage with trans-disciplinary projects.

The notion of transactional experience is particularly central for him, because “it connotes the idea of experiments in transcending disciplinary boundaries, transgressing entrenched dichotomies and transforming established concepts or topics, together with the idea that these transactions can succeed in advancing both theory and practice through the experiences and lessons that experiments induce.”⁵

In recent years, the visual arts have achieved increasing importance in his somaesthetic optic and this has been one of the new challenges he has accepted. Growing numbers of our most prominent artists have been inspired by aspects of his aesthetics and incorporated them into their artistic practices. They have been stimulated to immerse themselves further in his theoretical and practical practice in the art world by reading his works. This has resulted in an increase in requests from artists to contribute to their exhibition catalogues or to them contacting him in other contexts.

Richard Shusterman has also encountered new challenges. Many in the academic field have asked him why he has not included “the art of eating” in his somaesthetics. He recently decided to do this and held a lecture on the subject in Italy with the title, *The Art of Eating. L'Arte di mangiare* at the Food, Philosophy and Art conference - CIBO, Filosofia e Arte, Convergence Pollenzo, April 4-5, 2013 in collaboration with students from the University of Gastronomic Sciences. The conference leader described the general aims of the conference as follows:

“The complex relationship between food and art is a topic that has been explored by philosophers since the time of Plato. This discussion is more relevant than ever with the rising interest in gastronomy and cuisine, as well as new perspectives on the artistic capacity of chefs, the significance of art in the context of rapid technological advancement, and the strong influence of imagery and aesthetics on our daily lives. (..) How do ethics and aesthetics interact in gastronomy? What is the relationship between image, sound, and taste? Is a somaesthetics of food possible? For the first time, such questions will be explored in depth at an international convergence of chefs, philosophers, semiologists, students, artists, researchers, and passionate individuals from all walks of life.”

3 Richard Shusterman, “What Pragmatism Means to Me: Ten Principles”, *Revue française d'études américaines*, no 124, 2e trimestre 2010, p. 64.

4 Richard Shusterman, “Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty”, *Rethinking Art*, 2. Ed., New York 2000, p. 45.

5 See Richard Shusterman's catalogue essay to the exhibition, *Aesthetic Transactions. Pragmatist Philosophy through Art and Life*, Galleries Michel Journal, May 24 through June 6, 2012, pp. 10-11.



1. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Untitled (Free/Still)*. Shown in 1992, 1995, 2007/2011. Part of the MoMA collection, New York.

Fluxus, with roots in experimental music, emerged in the United States and Europe in the early 1960s. Fluxus artists, with their emphasis on performance and play, wanted to bring art and life together. They severed the traditional divisions between the different art forms and placed collaboration and audience participation at the center of the art world. They used food in a variety of imaginative ways in their performances and creative activities. In the years that followed, this development continued, but it has only really found a prominent niche in the art of this century.

The prominent Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija has created meals as exhibitions for over 20 years and presented wonderful Thai food in surprising installations in Thailand, Europe and in the USA, his country of residence. He has subsequently repeated his cooking- as-art sculpture all over the world. For him, “art is what you eat.” He is particularly known for creating projects that are to be used, are socially grounded and in which the viewer is always a very active participant. The participatory and performance aspects of Tiravanija’s art echo elements seen in work by Joseph Beuys in the 1970s, which defined ‘social sculpture’ as an art form in which dialogue and ideas are an artist’s primary tools.

Tiravanija’s installations often take the form of stages or rooms for sharing meals, cooking, reading and playing music. The architecture or other structures he uses always form the framework for a variety of social events, such as in the installation *Untitled (Free)* (1992) (fig. 1), which was also shown in 1995, 2007 and 2011. Tiravanija originally created this at 303 Gallery in New York and it now belongs to MoMA. Glenn Lowry, the director of MoMA points out that Tiravanija was “interested in exploring the possibility of creating congenial social spaces in places usually reserved for the quiet contemplation of art.” He “transferred everything from the gallery’s back office - even the dealer and her staff - to the exhibition space. He then converted

the empty office space into a kind of restaurant, where he cooked curry and rice, serving it to visitors free of charge.”⁶

Tiravanija’s artistic goal is also realized in a very impressive way in the project he developed for *Secession in Vienna* (2002) in which he took Rudolf Schindler’s Kings Road House in Los Angeles as his conceptual starting point. Rirkrit Tiravanija’s project is based on Rudolf Schindler’s House and the visions behind it, which are significant not only for architecture, but also for art and the destruction of the false barrier between art and action, that often – as Richard Shusterman remarks – “trivializes art and robs its power of positive praxis. For art’s highest aim is not to make a few admirable objects in a world filled with misery, but to create a better world through the work such objects can generate.”⁷

Rirkrit Tiravanija created a reconstruction of the studio tract of the so-called Schindler House in the main room of the *Secession* and used this as a stage for a variety of activities that provided visitors to the exhibition with new inspiration and revealed new layers of meaning in our daily lives. Thus: “Tiravanija’s interest focuses less on a faithful architectural facsimile than on ‘animating’ Rudolf Schindler’s world of ideas, his concept of inside and outside in relation to the conditions of private and public spaces. To this Tiravanija adds his own ideas on relationships and communities, his characteristic conception of art as an investigation and implementation of “living well” where the art of eating has a central place. Throughout the duration of the exhibition, the installation was used as a venue for a multimedia program offered by Tiravanija and various guests, with features such as film screenings, concerts, presentations and lectures.”⁸ Time to eat wonderful Thai meals is also part of the activities in the rebuilt Schindler House (fig. 2).

Another example of this sort of installation, where eating is in focus, is *Fear Eats the Soul* at Gavin Brown’s Enterprise in which his assistant served bowls of soup every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 5 March - 16 April 2011 (fig. 3). The title is taken from Fassbinder’s film of the same name. Tiravanija “set up areas for communal eating and opened the gallery to the street, thereby collapsing public and private space.” This is another example of “his (ongoing) effort to create and widen channels of communications.”⁹

6 http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=147206

7 Richard Shusterman, *A House divided*, From the Documenta X (1997) catalogue on the work of Rosemarie Trockel and Carsten Höller.

8 See Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Secession in Vienna*. July 5-Sept. 1, 2002. www.secession.at/art/2002_tiravanija_e.html

9 Nicole J. Caruth “Gastro-Vision on soup” <http://bit.ly/bukdahl4>



2. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Time to eat meals* in "Schindler House." Exhibition View. Secession, Vienna 2002.



3. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Fear Eats the Soul (Soup Kitchen)*. Gavin Brown's Enterprise. New York, April 2011.



4. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Cooking and drawing event*. Art 42 Basel. June 17, 2011.

He describes his interactive artistic intentions with focus on food's ability to build community as follows:

“The situation is not about looking at art. It is about being in the space, participating in an activity. The nature of the visit has shifted to emphasize the gallery as a space for social interaction. The transfer of such activities as cooking, eating or sleeping into the realm of the exhibition space puts visitors into very intimate if unexpected contact; the displacement creates an acute awareness of the notion of public and private, the installations function like scientific experiments: the displacement becomes a tool and exposes the way scientific thought processes are constructed. The visitor becomes a participant in that experiment.”¹⁰

In Shusterman's aforementioned lecture in Pollenzo, he emphasized that “human eating is a social event” and that “eating is a performing art” - the precise characteristics that Tiravanija visualizes in his installations. And this is why, as Shusterman stresses, “a meal” can be regarded as “an artwork.”

In *Cooking and drawing event*, Art 42 Basel (June 17, 2011) (fig. 4) Tiravanija appealed to viewers in a very immediate and sensuous way, not only because they ate together, but also because warm new relationships were created between them. In the gallery you encountered a booth full of cooking pots and all the implements of curry making. And you saw Tiravanija working at cooking a wonderful Thai meal. His gallerist told visitors that “anyone who wanted to could pick up a piece of charcoal and make drawings on the booth's wall about the recent protests in that region. Behind the artist was a drawing of Egyptian protesters carrying a sign that read ‘Mubarak you are retired.’”¹¹ In this work he again uses strategies of hospitality and

10 John Perreault, Rirkrit Tiravanija: “Fear Eats the Soul”, see http://www.artsjournal.com/artopia/2011/04/rirkrit_tiravanija_fear_eats_t_1.html

11 <http://observer.com/2011/06/hold-the-fish-sauce-rirkrit-tiravan>

dialogue to transform galleries and museums into social spaces for cooking and eating and often combined with comments on national and international political issues.

In his installations, where meals are integrated, Tiravanija always creates new relationships between people and breaks down barriers between societal groups and conventional ways of thinking. It is precisely this liberating process that is one of the main themes in Shusterman's somaesthetics and which Tiravanija interprets in many surprising and artistic ways in his installations where meals play a central role.

Richard Shusterman remarked in an interview with Aude Launay on Biological Aesthetics that he admires some European artists of "relational orientation" such as Rirkrit Tiravanija.

He met Tiravanija at an Art and Experience event organized by the Italian art critic Maurizio Bartolotti in Venice in 2004. Tiravanija works in the same interactive manner as Carsten Höller and the other artists that Shusterman has worked with or presented in different contexts.¹²



5. SUPERFLEX, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Tobias Rehberger, *Superportagasfloorkitchen without building*, shown in the exhibition "More works about buildings & food" in Oeiras, Portugal, 10. November 2000.

The three Danish visual artists Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger and Rasmus Nielsen formed a project group in 1993 that they called SUPERFLEX. They have already gained international recognition for their projects, which are based on new technology but also use networking and social processes such as making food as their working material.

They define their goals as follows:

"We are interested in using our position as artists to explore the contribution that the field of art can make to social, political and economic change."

¹² "Biological Aesthetics. Richard Shusterman", an interview by Aude Launay in 02. *Revue d'art contemporain trimestrielle et gratuite* 2008, no 48 with English texts.

To achieve this goal they have worked together with Tiravanija on several occasions and included cooking as a part of their attempts to create new communities and help impoverished populations that cannot afford to buy oil and electricity such as those in Thailand. They worked with engineers to create a simple Super Gas Biogas system which runs exclusively on organic materials such as human and animal stools.

SUPERFLEX created a work in collaboration with Rirkrit Tiravanija and Tobias Rehberger for the exhibition "*More Works about Buildings & Food*" (fig. 5) in Oeiras, Portugal, 10 November 2000. After the exhibition the project was dispatched to *The Land* in Chiang Mai in Thailand, where so many innovative projects have been installed. This project created a cheap method of cooking, but also new relations among people. The "project presented ideas on how to integrate the biogas system into a domestic kitchen environment later to be used in the country in Chiang Mai. It consisted of a 1:1 model landscape of the environment including a floor (8 x 12 metres) that uses the weight of people standing on it to create the pressure needed to supply gas for cooking purposes. The model comprised: one biogas system / mattress / gas storage / wooden floor / kitchen / camping."¹³

There are some clear parallels between the aims of SUPERFLEX and one of the key- words in Shusterman's original development of pragmatism. This concerns what he calls "community" and which he characterizes as "an indispensable medium for the pursuit of better beliefs, knowledge, and even for the realization of meaning through language and the arts." He is convinced that "community is not only a cognitive theme in pragmatism but also an aesthetic, ethical, and political one, and it contributes to pragmatism's fundamentally democratic orientation. Pragmatists have offered cognitive, ethical, and aesthetic arguments for democracy." Shusterman's concept of sensory perception in somaesthetics also provides a better understanding of both the aesthetic dimensions of eating as well as its ability to create new relations between people, thereby improving the lives of underprivileged societies. And the surprising environment and setting enrich the embodied experience of gustatory taste and the inviting smell.

13 http://www.superflex.net/activities/2000/11/10/supergas_-_more_works_about_buildings_-_food/image/2#g



6. Song Dong. *Eating the City*. Installation, London, February, 2006.

Song Dong is one of China's leading experimental artists. He has been active in sculpture, performance, photography and video. He uses food as building materials in his installations to get the viewer to eat them in new ways, thereby creating a different understanding of their tastes and smells. This is particularly true of his series of edible installations titled *Eating the City* which were exhibited from 2003-2006 in Barcelona, Beijing, Hong Kong, London, Oxford and Shanghai. He also visualizes the dramatic transformations that these cities have undergone. He describes his goal as follows:

“The purpose (..) is for the city I build to be destroyed ... As the cities in Asia grow, old buildings are knocked down and new ones built, almost every day (...). My city is tempting and delicious. When we are eating the city we are using our desire to taste it, but at the same time we are demolishing the city and turning it into a ruin.”¹⁴

A very impressive example is the large installation *Eating the City*, London, February 2006 (fig. 6), which was constructed out of different kinds of biscuits and stimulated two senses: smell and sight. Working with a team of very gifted food artists, he used wafers, biscuits, cookies and candy to create edible models of the most famous landmarks in Shanghai. This installation was shown in Shanghai on 25 December 2010. Viewers got a new and more tangible impression of the city and were inspired to eat in a new more leisurely manner which provided them with the opportunity to enjoy the special tastes of the different cakes.

Edible Penjing, which was shown from April 1 to July 1, 2000 in the artist's Open Studio at Gasworks consists of British ingredients - including mashed potato, salmon, carrot, mincemeat

14 a b c d “Song Dong: Waste Not”. London, Barbican Centre. 20 December 2011.

and broccoli. Penjing can best be described as an artistic composition, including miniaturized trees, rocks, water and other natural elements. It is also a famous Chinese cultural signifier. In *Edible Penjing*, Song Dong visualizes with irony and humor the relationship between art and life and between Western and Eastern cultures.

Many Chinese people who visited Song Dong's studio and tasted the *Edible Penjing* thought it was delicious even though they were not normally partial to British food. When food is put into a creative context, it becomes appetizing in a new way. In *Meat Mountain*, 2009 it is the construction of a mountain of meat that is in focus and the serving of it is highlighted in a special way. But there are also symbolic layers to the work. These are "Song's broader emphasis on ephemerality, drawn from Zen Buddhism, which points to the transience of bodily needs and desires, even as he aims to fulfill them."¹⁵ The encounter with this work also creates a sense of what it is to be a "cultural consumer."

In the video *A Blot on the Landscape*, which consists of four video works, the same theme is developed in a different and very surprising way and with a more dramatic optic. The visitors who saw this work agreed that the "most impressive of them was the one with blue lagoon and a boulder made of some form of meat hanging precipitously over 'the water.'" But they soon discover that "action creeps into the frames. A lone hand holding a cleaver descends from the sky over the lagoon, demolishing the boulder and its surroundings into unrecognizable pieces, while scissors savagely snip the broccoli and peppers into bite-size chunks."¹⁶ By using food as building materials, Song Dong has succeeded in visualizing the destruction of food and the mass production of food as well as the inevitability of natural forces in an innovative and provocative manner.

In the Fluxus artist Dieter Roth we see several roots for the experiments of subsequent artists with food as creative building materials. His *Portrait of the artist as a Vogelfutterbüste* (birdseed bust) consisting of multiple layers of chocolate and birdseed (1968) (fig. 7), is a good example of his ironic attitude to existence.

15 See *Gastronomica*: End of preview of the article "Edible Landscape. Song Dong", *The Journal of Food and Culture*, vol. 10, no 3, summer 2010, p. 10.

16 Song Dong At Pace Gallery Offers Food For Thought- Beijing - Beijing Blogs Blog, City Weekend Guide, 16 November 2010.



7. Dieter Roth. *Portrait of the artist as a Vogelfutterbüste (birdseed bust)* 1968, multiple of chocolate and birdseed. Dieter Roth Foundation. Hamburg

To achieve maximum impact for his social criticism and his rebellion against traditional notions of art, he created artist's books, using a variety of foodstuffs as his preferred artistic strategies. *Literature Sausage* (1969), is an artist's book made of gelatin, lard and spices in a natural casing. It expresses the hope of forging a path to a new world. The book entitled *Big Sunset* (1968) was created by pressing a sausage on card in a plastic cover. Dieter Roth's works are instantly captivating. It has been remarked that "they embrace decay while enduring into the present."

The Korean artist Yeonju Sung creates dresses primarily out of vegetables. She has created elegant evening dresses out of tomatoes and Lotus roots (2010) (fig. 8.) "For a brief moment they existed, but for far longer they inspire with their amazing creativity, brilliant hues and seductive forms. In many ways they aren't far in nature from a wedding dress, worn once and captured in photographic memory of the occasion... savored and remembered, never to be worn again."¹⁷

All of the aforementioned artists have used foods in different and imaginative ways. But none of them have been particularly interested in visualizing the particular power of fascination that the different aromatic scents many of the plants and various fluids create. This is also true of the foodstuffs that we use on a daily basis.

17 <http://www.visualnews.com/2013/04/23/wearable-food-from-korean-artist-yeon-ju-sung/#LuBKSQbcGLgAvwyb.99>



8. Yeonju Sung. *Tomato Dress*. 2010.

For the Venice Biennale in 2011, the renowned Chinese curator Peng Feng selected several artists who worked with this theme in very poetic and surprising ways. In an interview with Peng Feng, Shusterman pointed out the special talent that Chinese artists have in “defining art in terms of beauty and pleasure” and interpreting them “in a distinctively sensory, sensual way as opposed to a dominantly cognitive pleasure of intellectual form” characteristic of Western culture:

“Your pavilion conception *Pervasion* explains art in terms of beauty and then treats beauty in terms of flavors or smells - senses that the Western tradition considers least aesthetically valid because the least cognitive and clear. Your five installations involve clouds with tea fragrance; dripping pipes of wine, beer, and spirits; fragrant porcelain pots of herb medicine; fog of incense; and lotus-scented virtual snow. You explain this emphasis on beauty and flavor as a distinctively Chinese perspective.”

An example of this kind of artwork is Cai Zhisong’s installation, *Clouds with Tea* which is built up out of many elements like tea leaves, cotton, balloons, helium (fig. 9) creating a poetic atmosphere with different odors which appeals powerfully to our sense of smell.

Peng Feng told us that his contribution to Venice Biennale represents a Chinese perspective, because body consciousness has always played an important role in traditional Chinese art and aesthetics. But he adds that he has only really become aware of it since studying Shusterman’s somaesthetics.¹⁸



9. Cai Zhisong. *Sculptures of clouds with Tea* and Yoan Gong. *Fog*. Installation. Venice Art Biennale

The innovative Danish artist Ib Monrad has worked mostly with creating large projects dealing with very large interpretations of cosmic space. In the construction of these large-scale works he has used Western painting techniques as well as Chinese ink painting. Shusterman emphasized in his aforementioned lecture in Pollenzo that there is also “a tactile experience of eating.” He is thinking in particular of the tools that we use when we eat and which we seldom look at. Artists have often been capable of visualizing expressively the many things that we rush past in our goal-

18 Chine - commissaire Peng Feng” *Art press supplément* Venise 2011, pavillons nation- aux, p. 25

oriented world. One example is Ib Monrad's *Nature Morte* (2013)(fig. 10), in which the spoon is imbued with a particular power of fascination, because it is removed from the anonymous daily context in which it is usually locate.



10. Ib Monrad. *Nature Morte*. 2013.

The Austrian artist Erwin Wurm, who has made a significant impact on the international art scene, creates humorous and provocative “food art” like *Sausage Sculptures*. Using red frankfurters, he conjures forth five impressive situations, full of irony and unexpected forms. We encounter a sweet *dog* (fig. 11), an inviting door, a warm kiss, a thin pole and a fascinating Buddhist stupa.¹⁹

¹⁹ See Else Marie Bukdahl, “Surprising sculptures enabling us to think and create in new ways. About Erwin Wurm’s sculptures which reveal new aspects of our daily life” in the catalogue to the exhibition *The Discipline of Subjectivity*. Erwin Wurm, Tonson Gallery, 14 Nov 2013 - 5. Jan. 2014



11. Erwin Wurm, *Dog*.

The outstanding Danish performance and conceptual artist, Søren Dahlgaard uses surprising strategies and humor in artworks like *The Dough Warrior* (2008) (fig. 12). This work appeals very intensely to our intellect, emotions and imagination. It is a “landscape painting performance” in which Søren Dahlgaard is transformed into a comical, hard-working painter covered from top to toe in baguettes. The transformation imbues the project with surprising force and an astonishing tactility. The artist throws himself into the painting process with an almost warlike intensity. Traditional landscape painting is transformed into an exciting performance. The performance demonstrates Søren Dahlgaard’s ability to work intuitively and reflectively and reveals new aspects of the often unpredictable creative process and drawing us into his dynamic artistic universe.²⁰ Søren Dahlgaard’s artworks stimulate the viewer to experience them with their entire body and all its senses. This is precisely the embodied perception and experience of art that Shusterman highlights.²¹

20 Else Marie Bukdahl, “New challenges for art and society”, article in the catalogue for the exhibition *Søren Dahlgaard*, Kunsthallen Brændrigården, Viborg, Denmark. June 9 August 12 2012, pp. 6869.

21 Shusterman, Intellectualism and the Field of Aesthetics: The Return of the Repressed, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 220, 2002, p. 331.



12. Søren Dahlgard, *The Dough Warrior*, 2008.

For Shusterman it is important that “somaesthetics can help not only explain but also improve aesthetic experience.”²² Knowledge of somaesthetics deepens our insight into how the surprising and imaginative use of different foodstuffs as building materials by artists can create a renewed understanding of their uniqueness. We see aspects of these foods which we might not otherwise have noticed.

This contributes to an improvement in our sensory experience and the way we use our bodies. In addition, many of the works that the artist has built out of foods, have a particular sensuality and in many instances also alluring scents which create a singularly intense expressive force. In many respects, these artworks can create this “powerful aesthetic experience” which Shusterman believes is necessary for art to elicit a response from “the general public.”²³ This intense effect is something that Song Dong, Dieter Roth, Yeonju Sung, Cai Zhisong and Erwin Wurm have succeeded in generating. But foods and eating utensils produced in an attentive manner can also have this effect. This is true of, for example, Ib Monrad’s drawing. Different artists, especially Rirkrit Tiravanija, Song Dong and SUPERFLEX have created, in their own respective expressive ways, performances and projects in which they have prepared very inviting meals. “Eating” in their vision becomes, in a very significant and different way, what Shusterman calls a “collaborative experience.” New communities are also created through these performances, which are characterized by “the meliorist goal of making things better,” something Shusterman regards as “a key and distinctive pragmatist orientation.”²⁴

22 Richard Shusterman, “Somaesthetics and Burke’s Sublime”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 45, no 4, October 2005, p. 341.

23 “Interviewing Richard Shusterman” Part in *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education*, April 2002, vol 1, p. 5.

24 Richard Shusterman, “What Pragmatism means to Me: Ten Principles”, *Revue française d’études américaines*, no. 124, 2e trimestre 2010, p. 64

Notes

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