

*De Gustibus ~~non~~ est Disputandum: the Culinary Arts, Ferran Adrià, and  
Documenta 12*

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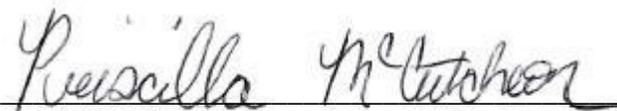
*De Gustibus ~~non~~ est Disputandum: the Culinary Arts, Ferran Adrià, and Documenta 12*

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## INTRODUCTION

When the New York Times first published an article about El Bulli, they compared me to Dalí. That was really flattering... But I'm a cook, and I'm well aware of my limitations. I admire the work of artists but I don't aspire to practice their art. Whether cuisine is an art form or not doesn't interest me. What I find fascinating is the dialogue between both disciplines: my dishes, for instance, have nothing to do with art. But, like an artist, I seek to move people through them. Above anything else, I've always wanted to make people happy with my work, and I think at El Bulli we succeeded in doing that. Food has an incredible power to create happiness.<sup>1</sup>

—Ferran Adrià

The old Latin idiom, *de gustibus non est disputandum* (in matters of *taste*, there can be no disputes) was put to the test during the quinquennial international art exhibition, *Documenta 12*, when chef Ferran Adrià was invited to participate as an artist in 2007.<sup>2</sup> In the show, Adrià established his world famous restaurant, *El Bulli*,<sup>3</sup> as *Pavilion G*, where his “ ‘artwork’ was a dinner every night [...] for two people, selected at random during the 100-day run of the exhibition and sent off with airfares and a voucher” (see [fig. 1](#) for Pavilion G's sample menu).<sup>4</sup> The chef is said to have succeeded in exploring “the ultimate borders of *taste*, to develop an

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<sup>1</sup> Marta Represa, “Ferran Adrià on El Bulli,” *AnOther Magazine*, July 22, 2013, accessed November 1, 2013, [http://www.anothermag.com/current/view/2887/Ferran\\_Adià\\_on\\_El\\_Bulli](http://www.anothermag.com/current/view/2887/Ferran_Adià_on_El_Bulli).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will capitalize “Taste” when referring to “aesthetic taste—[the] type of Taste signified in the expression of ‘philosophies of Taste’ or the ‘philosophical problem of taste’ ”; whereas the lowercase “taste” will refer to gustatory taste; and the lowercase and italicized “*taste*” will allude to both gustatory taste and aesthetic Taste. Regardless of how the term might appear in the original text I may be quoting; I will modify the word so as to consistently employ this rule throughout the paper. I am borrowing this concept (with the exception of “*taste*”) from Carolyn Korsmeyer’s *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 38.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that, when the restaurant closed its doors in 2011, its name was spelled “elBulli,” yet it has only been spelled this way since 2000. “For most of its history, [...] the place was called ‘El Bulli’; to call it ‘elBulli’ before 2000 would be anachronistic, and to switch back and forth between the two renderings according to the period in question would [...] be confusing. Therefore, unless I’m referring to a book title of the official name of one of the restaurant’s post-2000 enterprises, I have used the form ‘El Bulli’ throughout” (Colman Andrews, *Ferran: the Inside Story of El Bulli and the Man who Reinvented Food* [New York, N.Y.: Gotham Books, 2010], xi). Given that Andrews is recognized to have written the most authoritative biography on Adrià, I will adopt his reasoning and refer to the restaurant as “El Bulli.”

<sup>4</sup> Joanna Pitman, “Yum, Yum: Love the Mousse. But is it Art?” *Spectator Magazine* vol. 310, no. 9437 (July 11, 2009): 16, accessed December 28 2013, <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/3755658/yum-yum-love-the-mousse-but-is-it-art/>.

experimental aesthetic that [took] the mouth, rather than the eye, as its point of departure.”<sup>5</sup> Adrià and his cuisine turned out to be issues of much discussion and debate over the course of the exhibition for a variety of reasons, primarily stemming from the misconception that food cannot inspire the same type of critical thought as the fine arts can.<sup>6</sup> What failed on a larger level, however, was Documenta’s inability to generate a proper dialogue that could unite both the visual and culinary arts.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, Adrià’s participation in the exhibition was appropriate and, eventually successful in encouraging scholars and art aficionados to broaden their understanding of what can acceptably be called a work of art.

Having been referred to not only as an artist, but also as an “inventor, scientist, designer, philosopher and stage director,” Ferran Adrià was the executive chef and co-owner of the “world’s most creative restaurant,” the renowned El Bulli, located along the Spanish Mediterranean coast just outside of Barcelona in Cala Montjoi.<sup>8</sup> Praised for its stellar food and excellent dining experience, a dinner at El Bulli “involve[d] all the senses, it engage[d] the mind, and [was] also, at times, a strangely emotional experience.”<sup>9</sup> Despite the restaurant’s closure in 2011, to this day the Catalan chef is still considered one of the leading pioneers of the cuisine commonly referred to as *molecular gastronomy*, a style of avant-garde cooking known for its

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<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Birnbaum, “Alimentary School: Charlotte Birnbaum on Ferran Adrià and Futurist Cooking,” *Artforum International* vol. 48, no. 2 (October, 2009): 112.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the controversy, see: John Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” *Observer Food Monthly* vol. 69 (December 17, 2006): 40-5, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/foodmonthly/futureoffood/story/0,,1969713,00.html>; Jay McInerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” *Vanity Fair Magazine* vol. 52, no. 10 (October, 2010): 170-5, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2010/10/el-bulli-201010>; Graham Keeley, “Is Food Art? El Bulli Chef Creates a Stir,” *Independent*, May 16, 2007, sec. Europe, p. 19; and Anton Vidokle, “Art without Artists?” *e-flux* vol. 16 (May, 2010): 1-9, accessed October 22, 2013, [http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article\\_136.pdf](http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_136.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Alisuskas, “Introduction,” *Invisible Culture* vol. 14 (Winter, 2010): 2, accessed October 31, 2013, [http://www.rochester.edu/in\\_visible\\_culture/Issue\\_14/](http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_14/).

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Searle, “Should I Eat it or Frame it?” *Guardian*, September 14, 2008, p. 4, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/sep/15/foodanddrink.restaurants>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

scientific application of chemistry and physics as a means to restructure and recreate food.<sup>10</sup> Adrià's boldly inventive compositions were described and hailed by critics as being "playful, amazing, and frightening," which gave him a reputation for providing his diners with an ability to approach food intellectually.<sup>11</sup> In conceiving such dishes, an unquestionable amount of artistic creativity was involved, and led several critics to claim that: "the most radical of Adrià's culinary experiments have come as close to serious contemporary art as cooking ever has."<sup>12</sup> The internationally renowned Pop-artist Richard Hamilton even claimed that "the food [at El Bulli] ha[d] lyrical beauty. [Adrià's] meals, which last[ed] for about three hours, [were] an extraordinary experience and they seem to relate to art. There [was a] quality to the staging, the exquisite sensations, smells and flavors and the wonderful performance."<sup>13</sup> The pervasiveness of such comments gave way to Adrià's participation as an artist at Documenta 12, a "sort of art world Olympics" held in Kassel, Germany.<sup>14</sup> Documenta's director and head curator, Roger Buergel, explained that he included Adrià because he believed "that to create a new cooking

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<sup>10</sup> Gerry Dawes, "Over the Foaming Wave," *Food Arts* (September, 2008): 73-4, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.foodarts.com/people/food-artist/1189/over-the-foaming-wave>. For more on Molecular Gastronomy as a culinary discipline, see: Hervé This, "Food for Tomorrow? How the Scientific Discipline of Molecular Gastronomy Could Change the Way we Eat," *EMBO Reports* vol. 7, no. 11 (2006): 1062-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/sj.embor.7400850>, and "Molecular Dishes and Exploring Culinary 'Precisions': The Two Issues of Molecular Gastronomy," *British Journal of Nutrition* vol. 93, supplement S1 (April, 2005): S139-46, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1079/BJN20041352>, and "Molecular Gastronomy is a Scientific Discipline, and Note by Note Cuisine is the Next Culinary Trend," *Flavour* vol. 2, no. 1 (2013): 1-8, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/2044-7248-2-1>; Sophia Roosth, "Of Foams and Formalisms: Scientific Expertise and Craft Practice in Molecular Gastronomy," *American Anthropologist* vol. 115, no. 1 (March, 2013): 4-16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2012.01531.x>; Jaime Friel Blanck, "Molecular Gastronomy: Overview of a Controversial Food Science Discipline," *Journal of Agricultural & Food Nutrition* vol. 8, no. 3 (2007): 77-85, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J108v08n03\\_07](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J108v08n03_07); Davide Cassi, "Science and Cooking: the Era of Molecular Cuisine," *EMBO Reports* vol. 12, no. 3 (March, 2011): 191-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/embor.2011.18>; and Grace Yek and Kurt Struwe, "Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy," *Food Technology* vol. 62, no. 6 (June, 2008): 34-43, accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/news/0608featgastronomy.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Susie Rushton, "Bulli for Him: Ferran Adrià on why he's the World's Greatest Chef," *Independent*, October 25, 2007, p. 2, accessed October 24, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/bulli-for-him-ferran-adria-on-why-hes-the-worlds-greatest-chef-395311.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Blake Gopnik, "Palate vs. Palette: Avant-Garde Cuisine as Contemporary Art," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2009, sec. Food, p. E01, accessed December 28, 2013, [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-09-23/opinions/36798315\\_1\\_art-critic-elbulli-documenta](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-09-23/opinions/36798315_1_art-critic-elbulli-documenta).

<sup>13</sup> Pitman, "Yum, Yum," quoting Richard Hamilton.

<sup>14</sup> Carlin, "If the World's Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he'd Starve," 48.

technique was as complicated and challenging as painting a great picture. [...] The work [Adrià] does [is] a new artistic discipline, [he] shows that cuisine should be a new art form.”<sup>15</sup> Over the course of his career, Adrià has continually baffled expectations of what cookery, or indeed food, could be. Having stated that he “wanted to make people think and reflect,”<sup>16</sup> the chef’s physical and chemical restructuring of food was “a conscious attempt to break up all the conventions that [the diner had] assimilated. [His guest thought] a certain food was going to taste like this, and then it turned out to taste like something else [...] - it was an attack against [the diner’s] wishes and expectations.”<sup>17</sup> The chef’s familiarity with this genre of avant-garde cuisine, coupled with his deliberate control of the human senses, allowed him to psychologically and aesthetically alter the act of eating. Ultimately, Adrià’s innovative thought and meticulous attention to detail allowed *Restaurant Magazine* to bestow the prestigious title of “World’s Best Restaurant” on five separate occasions,<sup>18</sup> which resulted in such a dramatic increase in popularity that had the restaurant been open year-round and every reservation been accepted, El Bulli would have been booked for 125 years.<sup>19</sup>

Studies in molecular gastronomy emerged in the early 1980s as a means for large-scale commercial food companies, to analyze the composition of food at its most basic chemical and physical levels, in order to enhance flavors and ensure the product’s marketability.<sup>20</sup> In restaurants, however, molecular gastronomy did not emerge as a cooking style until the mid-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

<sup>17</sup> Vicente Todolí and Richard Hamilton, eds., *Food for Thought, Thought for Food* (New York, N.Y.: Actar, 2009), 238, quoting Bice Curiger.

<sup>18</sup> Sue Woodward, “World’s Best Restaurants 2009 List,” *World’s 50 Best Restaurants*, 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.theworlds50best.com/list/past-lists/2009/>.

<sup>19</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

<sup>20</sup> Roosth, “Of Foams and Formalisms,” 4.

1990s, when certain chefs understood it as a way to advance the culinary arts.<sup>21</sup> The type of avant-garde cuisine used by Adrià sought “not only to delight the guests’ palates, but also [to] evoke emotion and stimulate all other senses,” not only through its “investigation of new cooking methods [as a means] to improve and create new experiences in food,” but also in its study of “the cerebral and sensorial interpretations of foods.”<sup>22</sup> Due to this cuisine’s popularity in the upper echelons of the hospitality industry, many younger chefs have been inspired by its seemingly limitless possibilities and resultantly followed in Adrià’s footsteps by creating new cooking practices of their own, thereby altering the culinary landscape in their own way.<sup>23</sup>

Adrià, however, has a certain disdain for the term “molecular gastronomy.”<sup>24</sup> He believes that “all cooking is molecular, [...] in the sense that it involves altering the molecular structure of various substances, usually through the application of heat,” essentially, all cooking is theoretically molecular gastronomy.<sup>25</sup> Instead, he prefers calling his genre of cooking *techno-emotional cuisine*, or simply, *cocina de vanguardia*.<sup>26</sup> In the early 1990s, he understood this avant-garde cooking style’s potential of furthering the culinary arts, and adopted it as his own.<sup>27</sup> Through his use of seemingly futuristic ingredients and cooking equipment—such as anti-griddles, immersion circulators, and liquid nitrogen—Adrià sought not only to enchant his guests’ palates, but also to induce emotional reactions and stimulate all of the bodily senses,<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Friel Blanck, “Molecular Gastronomy,” 79. Many believe Adrià to be the earliest pioneer of this cuisine with his invention of culinary foams—which is a food turned into a light, airy froth and is traditionally served as a garnish (Andrews, *Ferran*, 175).

<sup>22</sup> Yek and Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” 36.

<sup>23</sup> Other world-renowned practicing chefs who are said to practice molecular gastronomy include Heston Blumenthal of England’s *The Fat Duck*, Grant Achatz of Chicago’s *Alinea*, Wylie Dufresne of New York City’s *wd-50*, and Homaro Cantu of Chicago’s *Motto*.

<sup>24</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 176. Given Adrià’s aversion for the term “molecular gastronomy,” this paper will henceforth refer to this genre of cuisine as “culinary deconstructivism.”

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* “Molecular gastronomy” is also referred to as *nouvelle-cuisine* or *haute-cuisine*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-7; and Friel Blanck, “Molecular Gastronomy,” 82.

<sup>28</sup> Yek and Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” 36.

including the “sense of disbelief.”<sup>29</sup> Phrased more succinctly, some have considered this genre of cuisine to be “the science of deliciousness.”<sup>30</sup>

Having stated that he wanted to encourage critical thought and reflection, Adrià’s restructuring of ingredients was a deliberate attempt to disrupt his diners’ traditional conceptions of food, effectively requiring them to question the fundamental nature of gastronomy.<sup>31</sup> While some in the world of haute-cuisine have accused him of creating “flavors that don’t exist,”<sup>32</sup> Adrià “insists that the technique itself is beside the point: ‘I don’t care how it’s made. I care about what I want to say with it.’”<sup>33</sup> He was more concerned with developing new methods and processes that would be applicable to the culinary arts rather than creating delicious food.<sup>34</sup> The visual presentation of his dishes forced his guests to rely on preconceived notions as to what that food would taste like; and it was not until physically interacting with the food that the diner came to the realization that the dish’s taste or texture was not what the mind had made it out to be. Adrià has claimed that the philosophical basis for his genre of cuisine was “principally based on three pillars: the technical-conceptual search; the role of the senses that came into play when creating a dish and when eating it; and the sixth sense, the role of reason and reflection during the act of eating.”<sup>35</sup> After having taken into account these “three pillars,” the manner in which Adrià proceeded to concoct his creations was through what he called a “gastronomic process,”

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur Lubow, “A Laboratory of Taste,” *New York Times Magazine*, August 10, 2003, p. 38, accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/10/magazine/a-laboratory-of-taste.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

<sup>30</sup> Yek and Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” 35, quoting Harold McGee.

<sup>31</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

<sup>32</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 235. For more on the controversy on Molecular Gastronomy within the restaurant industry, see: Gerry Dawes, “Spain’s Chemical Reaction,” *Food Arts* (September, 2009): 53-6, accessed December 30, 2013, <http://www.foodarts.com/news/features/879/spains-chemical-reaction>; and Victoria Burnett, “‘Spherified’ Juice? Controversy among Spain’s Top Chefs,” *New York Times*, June 1, 2008, p. A14, accessed January 4, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/28/travel/28iht-chefs.1.13237285.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Gopnik, “Palate vs. Palette.”

<sup>34</sup> Adrià has said that, at El Bulli, “we wanted to push the limits – whether people liked it or not. I am happy when people enjoy my food. But it’s not my first priority” (Rushton, “Bulli for Him”).

<sup>35</sup> Dawes, “Over the Foaming Wave,” 76.

and although it appeared rather basic, it had “many variables.”<sup>36</sup> The first part of the process was to “pick a product; [then] decide whether or not to apply technology [to said product]; [then] use culinary techniques; this becomes an elaboration that may be intermediate or final elaboration; this [then] produces a final result, which we decide to serve or preserve.”<sup>37</sup> The practice of combining these notions is what Adrià refers to as *culinary deconstruction*,<sup>38</sup> which some credit with changing “the face of gastronomy.”<sup>39</sup>

Deconstruction, originally popularized by French theorist Jacques Derrida in his 1967 text, *Of Grammatology*, is defined as a mode of thought which is “directed towards exposing unquestioned metaphysical assumptions and internal contradictions in philosophical and literary language.”<sup>40</sup> Derrida’s deconstruction involved dismantling works of literature to decode the text’s arrangement and the meanings of its words in order to understand more comprehensively how these elements were socially constructed.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Adrià’s own version of deconstruction analyzes culinary texts and culturally iconic dishes in the pursuit of revealing the beliefs and values rooted in the established culinary canon.<sup>42</sup> Specifically, the culinary connotation of the term “involves the breaking down of familiar dishes into their constituent parts, changing the physical identity of at least some of those parts, and then reassembling the pieces in new ways, so that the dishes take on different forms while retaining sensory

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<sup>36</sup> Brett Littman, “‘Notes’ on *Notes on Creativity*: Ferran Adrià and Brett Littman in Conversation,” in *Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity* (New York, N.Y.: The Drawing Center Press, 2014), 14, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Christine Toomey, “A Feast of Engineering,” *Sunday Times*, March 28, 2010, sec. ST, p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” 45.

<sup>40</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “Deconstruction,” accessed October 28, 2013, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/view/Entry/48375?redirectedFrom=deconstruction>.

<sup>41</sup> Fabio Parasecoli, “Deconstructing Soup: Ferran Adrià’s Culinary Challenges,” *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture* vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter, 2001): 65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/gfc.2001.1.1.1.60>.

<sup>42</sup> Isabelle de Solier, “Liquid Nitrogen Pistachios: Molecular Gastronomy, elBulli and Foodies,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* vol. 13, no. 2 (2010): 163, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1367549409352275>. Furthermore, “a specific food cannot be decoded based solely on its flavor, visual aspect, texture, or temperature; the full width of its meaning cannot be grasped without analyzing its interaction with other discourses, practices, and cultural texts” (Fabio Parasecoli, “Savoring Semiotics: Food in Intercultural Communication,” *Social Semiotics* vol. 21, no. 5 [November, 2011]: 655, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2011.578803>).

connections with their [original] models.”<sup>43</sup> A fitting example of Adrià’s deconstructivist mentality was his *Hare Jus with Blackcurrant-Flavored Apple Jelly-CRU* (fig. 2), in which he dismantled a classic game dish into its individual ingredients and then proceeded to determine how to best accentuate each component. He then interpretively reconstructed the dish back into its initial form, thereby differentiating it from its original composition but still preserving its essence. Due in part to such creations, some considered a dinner at El Bulli to be comparable to the aesthetic experiences that are felt in certain works of art, and that his dishes essentially confronted the diner with exploring the outermost boundaries of *taste*.<sup>44</sup>

When Adrià opened his restaurant in 1994, he did so with the intention of initiating a discourse with his diners, as a means of creating an experience.<sup>45</sup> Adrià declared that “El Bulli is not a restaurant. It is not a business. It is a place where we push the limits of the kitchen – and we happen to share the results of that with the people that go there.”<sup>46</sup> As Mario Batali described it, the chef gained his reputation by having been “true to his Catalan roots—like Dalí, Casals, and Miró—he created a new way to work with the raw materials that challenge[d] a lot of what had previously been considered ‘the rules’ or the ‘way’ to eat and cook.”<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, Adrià is from the same region in Spain where Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, and Dalí were from, thereby reminding some of certain considerations which force (to whatever degree) contextualizing the chef within the established art-historical discourse.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Birnbaum, “Alimentary School,” 112.

<sup>45</sup> McNerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 172.

<sup>46</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

<sup>47</sup> McNerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 171, quoting Mario Batali.

<sup>48</sup> Prior to Adrià’s arrival, it is believed that Salvador Dalí ate at El Bulli, and it is known that Marcel Duchamp and Richard Hamilton frequented the restaurant when on vacation (Andrews, *Ferran*, 56-7). Furthermore, “Adrià is compared to other non-culinary figures from varying movements, including Antoni Gaudí, Sigmar Polke, the Futurists, Pablo Picasso, Thomas Pynchon and—maybe somehow less strange than all of them—Jeff Koons. Adrià’s respective correlations with these figures seem to be: a bizarre sense for ornament; a tendency for repetition and pattern; a fascination with speed and technology; a flair for abstraction; a flirtation with psychotropia and the

The comparisons and metaphors between Adrià's practice and those of established artists do not end with Batali's comments, as the chef could even be likened to an Old Master operating a workshop. Such a comparison was best seen in *el taller*, the culinary workshop and laboratory where the chef spent six months alongside his loyal team in Barcelona, researching and experimenting with different ingredients in the interest of conceiving next year's new menu.<sup>49</sup> Though appearing to be a space more suitable for conventional scientists (physicists, biologists, chemists, etc...), *el taller* housed high-tech cooking equipment, and it is where the chef played with chemicals such as maltodextrine and sodium alginate (to name only two of the many chemicals he used) to alter the consistency and texture of his creations.<sup>50</sup> In *el taller*, "everything [was] fair game, every culture, every ingredient, every conceivable way of dealing with it,"<sup>51</sup> the cooks worked and reworked the dish's foundational concept, and then focused on developing its flavor.<sup>52</sup> It was in this space that Adrià could be regarded as the Old Master, where he communicated the concept he wished to work on—however specific—to his team, the apprentices would then labor away, constantly experimenting, in an attempt to hone in on what the Master had envisioned.<sup>53</sup> While the team rarely succeeded on their first attempt, Adrià guided them throughout the process until his vision was fully realized. The prevalence of such comparisons and observations even prompted several museums to invite Adrià to take part in

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cosmic; and a savvy approach to commodity chic" (Mark Clintberg, "Hungry Eyes: Food Photography from *elBulli* and Beyond," *C Magazine* vol. 110 [Summer, 2011]: 19, accessed December 28, 2013, [https://www.dropbox.com/s/a6dcespaobwpkd/Clintberg\\_C110.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/s/a6dcespaobwpkd/Clintberg_C110.pdf)).

<sup>49</sup> Carlin, "If the World's Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he'd Starve," 45.

<sup>50</sup> Yek and Struwe, "Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy," 37.

<sup>51</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 169.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> To witness the workshop scenario in action, see: Ferran Adrià, *El Bulli: Cooking in Progress*, directed by Gereon Wetzel, aired September 15, 2011 (New York, N.Y.: Alive Mind Cinema, 2012): 6:45-23:59, DVD.

their exhibitions.<sup>54</sup> Documenta's invitation, however, was the only one he accepted because he wanted to explore what kind of a relationship he could develop with the world of art.<sup>55</sup>

Given the many art-historical biases against the artistic worthiness of a chef, Adrià was (and still is) generally considered an outsider to the art world, and as such, his participation in Documenta generated some international controversy given that some felt the chef was "invading" the world of art.<sup>56</sup> In this light, it is interesting to note the chef's original apprehension about participating in the exhibition: "I feel like an intruder. Artists all over battle all their lives to receive an invitation to display their work at Documenta and now I, a cook, am asked to go along!"<sup>57</sup> Despite the chef's own skepticism about his role as an artist, Buergel said that the conceptual element behind Adrià's work "looks to intensify the degustation experience by unsettling normal eating habits."<sup>58</sup> One critic elaborates by stating that "Adrià may create confusion about what one is eating, between what one expects and what one tastes and smells, but he does so with a purpose," which was to force his diners to reconsider traditional notions of

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<sup>54</sup> He recently held an exhibition at the Drawing Center in New York City (2014), entitled *Notes on Creativity*, where the Center believed that "Adrià pushes culinary boundaries with knowledge and wit, transforming the art of food into an art form all its own" (Brett Littman, "Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity," Drawing Center Press Release, p. 1, December 2, 2013, accessed December 23, 2013, <http://www.drawingcenter.org/download/media/131/>). For a review of *Notes on Creativity*, see: Roberta Smith, "A Culinary Dali, Delving into Palettes: Review," *New York Times*, February 13, 2014, p. C27, accessed February 20, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/arts/design/ferran-adria-opens-at-the-drawing-center.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/arts/design/ferran-adria-opens-at-the-drawing-center.html?_r=0).

Additionally, in 2013, he was featured in a solo-exhibition at the Somerset House in London, where the show "explore[d] El Bulli's history and its culinary evolution towards its famous avant-garde cuisine" (Li-mei Hoang and Christine Murray, "Giant Meringue Dog Gives Flavor of Closed elBulli Eatery," *Reuters News*, August 8, 2013, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/08/us-britain-elbulli-idUSBRE9770W120130808>). Furthermore, he was also asked to participate in exhibitions at both the Tate Modern in London and Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art (Andrews, *Ferran*, 223; and Todolí and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 78-80).

<sup>55</sup> Katy McLaughlin, "Portrait of the Artist as Chef," *Wall Street Journal*, November 1, 2008, p. W10, accessed October 31, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/SB122540113853785535.html?KEYWORDS=katy+mclaughlin>.

<sup>56</sup> Littman, "Ferran Adrià," 1; and Ferran Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, written and directed by David Pujol, aired December, 2011 (Girona, Spain: Visual13, 2011): 29:19, digital, accessed February 8, 2014, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdo\\_p4t5dIs&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdo_p4t5dIs&feature=youtu.be), quoting Bartomeu Matí.

<sup>57</sup> Carlin, "If the World's Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he'd Starve," 45.

<sup>58</sup> Jürgen Dollase, "2007 Ferran Adrià, documenta 12 at elBulli," in *Documenta 12 Kassel, 16/06-23/09, 2007, Catalog*, ed. by Roger M. Buergel et. al (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2007), 204 (for a full version of Dollase's text, see: [Appendix I](#), p. 104).

eating and how food can be perceived as well as consumed.<sup>59</sup> Arguably, the chef was successful in conveying his beliefs, however subtly, since he was using the act of eating—perhaps the most universally shared activity—to promulgate his philosophical ideas. There were many different and necessary components that had to coalesce to form the aesthetic experience El Bulli was known for, and similar to any great artist, Adrià required that his guests closely examine the conceptual nature of his work as a means of best comprehending his artistic identity and what he was striving to do.

The criticism which resulted from Adrià's participation in Documenta seems rather harsh and misguided given that the use of food or its depiction in the arts is nothing new, as it has long been a favored subject of banquet scenes and still-life paintings. More recently, it has even been used by contemporary artists such as Cildo Meireles, Marcel Broodthaers, and Rirkrit Tiravanija; scholars and art historians have acknowledged their practices and deemed them worthy of artistic recognition, as they offer multisensory works that make use of and address food in different ways, such as: its commodification, as an understanding of the abject, or as a form of relational aesthetics.<sup>60</sup> Tiravanija, an accepted and well-established contemporary artist, makes ample use of food in his pieces and is renowned for his hybrid installation performances in which he usually cooks a Thai curry or Pad Thai and offers it free of charge to his audience (see [fig. 3](#)).<sup>61</sup> In actuality, Tiravanija's practice does not seem so different from Adrià's. One critic, however, differentiated the two by explaining that:

the extraordinary aspect of [Tiravanija's] cooking is not its quality as cooking, but rather its presentation by Tiravanija himself as *an artist who cooks*. It is important

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<sup>59</sup> Searle, "Should I Eat it or Frame it?" 7.

<sup>60</sup> Maria Domene-Danés, "El Bulli: Contemporary Intersections between Food, Science, Art and Late Capitalism," *BRAC Barcelona Research Art Creation* vol. 1, no. 1 (2013): 103, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/brac.2013.04>.

<sup>61</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* vol. 110 (Autumn, 2004): 56, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/0162287042379810>.

to distinguish between the artistic decision to include an activity within an artwork and the curatorial power to designate something as art or like art through its inclusion in an exhibition.<sup>62</sup>

What one needs to recall in the context of Documenta is that it was not Adrià proclaiming his status as an artist, but rather the curators who portrayed him as one. What the majority of the criticism seemed to align itself with, was that since Adrià considers himself to be first and foremost a cook, rather than an artist, what he creates cannot be considered art.

This paper will address food—specifically Adrià’s avant-garde cuisine as presented during the Pavilion G dinner served at Documenta 12—and its viability as an artistic genre in order to validate both the artistic creativity required in preparing food, and its recognition within the accepted art-historical discourse. To demonstrate this argument, the academic works of: Carolyn Korsmeyer, Paul O’Neill, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Richard Hamilton; and journalistic criticisms and reviews by: Jonathan Jones, Hettie Judah, and Adrian Searle, will be examined discussed in order to begin dismantling the hierarchy which, in the contemporary discourse surrounding aesthetics, separates the culinary from the visual arts. My own opinions on the matter have been shaped after having worked both as a professional cook for three and half years, and as a waiter for another year in some of New York City’s best restaurants, which has led me to the conclusion that certain preparations of food are deserving of being recognized as art.

As the many television channels, shows, documentaries, magazines, and internet blogs have demonstrated, public interest in haute-cuisine and gastronomy has increased significantly within the last decade.<sup>63</sup> While many seem to agree that there is some form of artistry involved in

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<sup>62</sup> Vidokle, “Art without Artists?” 2.

<sup>63</sup> “Like art, food is also a genuine passion that people like to share with their friends. Many try their hands at it as amateurs — the weekend chef is what the Sunday painter used to be — while avowing their respect for the professionals and their veneration for the geniuses. It has developed, of late, an elaborate cultural apparatus that

enjoying, creating, and preparing a good meal, they are often incapable of adequately justifying their beliefs. Even today's members of the art community (scholars, artists, historians, etc...) might privately concede that a great dining experience can be comparable to the aesthetic experience found when enjoying a great work of art. Yet publicly, these same people will denounce the artistic merits of nouvelle-cuisine, and when pressed to elaborate on their stance, appear unable to ground their stance in any concrete or theoretical arguments. Instead, they seem to turn to the established body of literature and philosophical works that have long argued against the culinary arts being on par with the fine arts.

While some scholars and academics are now beginning to address such a topic, it has in the past been neglected by numerous academic disciplines. Resultantly, little has been written about the matter from a theoretical standpoint. Given the lack of necessary resources to further this discussion, I wanted to help lay a foundation with the interest of paving the way and encouraging future scholarly dialogues concerning the artistic merits of the culinary arts. In order to create such an opportunity, the best way of doing so seemed to be by focusing on matters of *taste*, which appeared to be an appropriate term for such a project given that it has both aesthetic and gustatory connotations. Furthermore, in addressing issues of *taste*, I was able to confront some of the arguments established by eighteenth century philosophers, which created and facilitated the present art-historical animosity regarding gastronomy.<sup>64</sup> By using their own

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parallels the one that exists for art, a whole literature of criticism, journalism, appreciation, memoir and theoretical debate. It has its awards, its maestros, its televised performances. It has become a matter of local and national pride, while maintaining, as culture did in the old days, a sense of deference toward the European centers and traditions — enriched at a later stage, in both cases, by a globally minded eclecticism” (William Deresiewicz, “A Matter of Taste?” *New York Times*, October 28, 2012, p. 5, accessed January 15, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/opinion/sunday/how-food-replaced-art-as-high-culture.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/opinion/sunday/how-food-replaced-art-as-high-culture.html?_r=0)).

<sup>64</sup> “Eighteenth-century theorists developed ‘philosophies of Taste,’ theories of the perception and appreciation of beauty that form the foundation for contemporary philosophies of art and aesthetic value” (Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 5). Additionally, Korsmeyer devotes ample space to the subject of aesthetic Taste in eighteenth century Europe in the chapter entitled “Philosophies of Taste,” in *Making Sense of Taste*, 38-67. Specific philosophers who worked on establishing criteria for judgments on Taste during this time period were:

rhetoric as a rebuttal, I hope to begin dismantling the credibility of the body of work that refuses to admit the culinary arts into its discussion.

While I may be of the opinion that many genres of cuisine are capable of being considered as valid expressions of artistic practice and creativity, I am currently only able to argue on behalf of Buerger and Noack. Their decision to include Adrià in one of the most prestigious contemporary international art exhibitions in existence provided me with the opportunity to make the case for nouvelle-cuisine's viability as an artistic genre. Adrià's participation in Documenta reflected larger issues found in the contemporary art world; specifically, that the hierarchies of artistic genres have remained stagnant over the last three centuries and are in desperate need of revision. Having stated that he "wanted to make people think and reflect," Adrià was undeniably able to do so and successfully blurred the definitions of

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Chevalier Louis de Jaucourt and Voltaire, s.v. "Goût," in *Encyclopédie; Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, ed. Denis Diderot et al., 7:761-70, University of Chicago, I.L.: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 Edition), ed. Robert Morrissey, accessed February 9, 2014, <http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.6:1331:1.encyclopedie0513.7683367>; John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), bk. 2, chap. 8, sec. 8, in *Collected Works* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 1:243; Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, 11 vols. (London, U.K.: J. Bohn, 1839-1845), 3:40-41; Francis Hutcheson, *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), ed. Peter Kivy (The Hague, Netherlands: Matrinus Nijhoff, 1973), 34; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. translated by J. H. Bernard (New York, N.Y.: Hafner Publishing Co., 1961); Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), ed. James T. Boulton (Notre Dame, I.L.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); and Georg W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1820), translated by T.M. Knox (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1977).

It must be noted, however, that arguments concerning matters of taste began long before eighteenth century philosophers began studying it. Though this paper will not directly address this issue, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the gustatory use of food has been largely dismissed and neglected in the study of aesthetics (which was initially developed as a means to study how one's bodily senses perceive and interpret the world) even though it provokes the use of several of one's senses (as opposed to merely sight for painting or hearing for music, each of which is only making use of one of the senses). For more on the controversy surrounding the gustatory use of food in the arts, see (among many others): St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (1265-73), Ia 2ae 27, 1; Hegel, *Introduction to Aesthetics*, 38-9; D. W. Prall, *Aesthetic Judgment* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell C., 1929), 57-75; Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Indianapolis, I.N.: Hackett, 1987), 98-9, 111; and Elizabeth Telfer, *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 1996). The preceding sources were found in Kevin Sweeney, "Can a Soup be Beautiful? The Rise of Gastronomy and the Aesthetics of Food," in *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry*, ed. Fritz Allhoff et al. (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 129-30.

what both cookery and food could be.<sup>65</sup> By conveying his philosophies through the act of eating, “a truly universal activity” which carries “enormous emotional and cultural power, [and] is able to elicit visceral reactions and passionate feelings,” Adrià has effectively forced those who study food in any capacity to re-examine history as a means of better understanding why and how the culinary arts have come to be.<sup>66</sup> I hope that this research project will serve as a starting point for future scholarly discussions by showing that gastronomy is deserving of increased scholarly attention, thereby forging a path that will begin to take apart the barriers that are presently stifling the potential for dialogue.

The French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who is remembered for being one of the first to bring together science and cooking in his seminal text on matters of taste from 1825, *The Physiology of Taste*.<sup>67</sup> In the book, he noted a distinct difference between the pleasures of eating, which “is the actual and direct sensation of satisfying a need,” and the pleasures of the table, which “are a reflective sensation which is born from the various circumstances of place, time, things, and people who make up the surroundings of the meal.”<sup>68</sup> Although this paper will exclusively use specific dishes offered at Pavilion G (which every diner was served) as examples to illustrate certain points—so as to keep the argument grounded in the original artistic context in which Adrià was featured—what is ultimately being considered is the pleasures resulting from

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<sup>65</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

<sup>66</sup> Fabio Parasecoli, “A Taste of Louisiana: Mainstreaming Blackness through Food in *The Princess and the Frog*,” *Journal of African American Studies* vol. 14, no. 4 (December, 2010): 451, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12111-010-9137-y>.

<sup>67</sup> “Brillat-Savarin compiled the research, speculations, and opinions that went into his *Physiologie du goût* over almost three decades, publishing it at his own expense in 1825 [...]. The book immediately captured attention, and it remains a worthy model of a study of taste that is serious yet light-hearted, moderate without moralism, speculative yet sensible. It is also a monument of its kind to what can be accomplished through amateur research and thoughtful introspection [...]. [*La physiologie du goût*] is a series of aphorisms, essays, and ruminations about the sense of taste, food, appetite, drink, sex, and pleasure. The book blends science, theory, history, and practice, and to the latter end includes some recipes and tips for food preparation” (Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 69-70).

<sup>68</sup> Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *La physiologie du goût* (Paris, France, 1825); or, *The Physiology of Taste, or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, translated by M.F.K. Fisher (New York, N.Y.: Everyman’s Library, 2009), 189-90. Brillat-Savarin notes that the requirements for good “table pleasure” are: “food at least passable, good wine, agreeable companions, and enough time” (*ibid.*, 192).

the table—and not those of eating—at El Bulli, since the chef considered this to be his true oeuvre.<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, it can clearly be seen that Adrià’s featuring as an artist during Documenta 12 proved that *de gustibus non est disputandum* (in matters of *taste*, there can be no disputes).

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<sup>69</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 248. “The product is the whole experience, from start to finish” (Julia Hanna, “Customer Feedback not on elBulli’s Menu,” *Harvard Business School Cases*, November 18, 2009, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6105.html>).

## CHAPTER I

### **Digesting Otherness**

This colorless, odorless, tasteless chemical, it was said, kills many thousands of people every year; can cause a host of unpleasant conditions including excessive sweating, frequent urination, and electrolyte imbalance; is capable of corroding many metals; and in one form may cause severe burns. It is also used as an industrial solvent and a fire retardant, and in the production of Styrofoam. Dihydrogen Monoxide, of course, is H<sub>2</sub>O—water.<sup>70</sup>

As can be seen in this chapter's opening quotation, when improperly presented, something as benign as water can assume an entirely new and unrecognizable identity. Similarly, these sorts of decontextualized and misrepresented identities are present in numerous contemporary art exhibitions, and were evident with Adrià's participation in Documenta. While cuisine has never traditionally been regarded worthy of artistic consideration, Adrià along with Documenta curators Buerger and Ruth Noack, hoped to spur a dialogue in which the art world would begin to more seriously consider the artistic merits of gastronomy. Unfortunately, however, all Documenta succeeded in doing was creating a discussion which barely grazed the surface of the intended debate.

Adrià understood from the beginning of his career that he would develop a close rapport with the world of art, and is what led him to accept Buerger's invitation to the exhibition.<sup>71</sup> The chef did so because he believed Documenta to be the appropriate platform to try to understand “what kind of a relationship [he] had with the world of art.”<sup>72</sup> Since he would be the first chef to be featured as an artist, rather than as a cook, alongside other well established and internationally renowned artists, Adrià and Buerger brought the argument of cooking as art to the forefront of

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<sup>70</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 227.

<sup>71</sup> “ ‘Our dialogue with the world of design,’ Ferran once [said], ‘is more powerful than with any other discipline’ ” (ibid., 223).

<sup>72</sup> McLaughlin, “Portrait of the Artist as Chef.”

the contemporary art world.<sup>73</sup> Buergel had never eaten at El Bulli, but explained that he chose to include Adrià because his work made people think,<sup>74</sup> and that:

he has succeeded in generating his own aesthetic which has become something very influential within the international scene. This is what I am interested in and not whether people consider it art or not. It is important to say that artistic intelligence doesn't manifest itself in a particular medium, that art doesn't have to be identified simply with photography, sculpture and painting etc., or with cooking in general; however, under certain conditions, it can become art.<sup>75</sup>

In press conferences, Buergel stated that his mission for the show was about putting art and the viewer's experience first, about creating the conditions in which art could function as originally intended by the artist, and in a way that viewers could understand and have the aesthetic experience that only art could offer.<sup>76</sup> As a means of fulfilling Buergel's intentions of attempting to properly contextualize the exhibition's art, Adrià and the show's organizers took an unconventional approach and turned El Bulli into Pavilion G, some 850 miles away from all of Documenta's other pavilions in Kassel.<sup>77</sup> The chef's decision to remain in Spain was a "very reflected decision that [tried] [...] to show that [the] El Bulli experience [could not] be decontextualized from the restaurant,"<sup>78</sup> ultimately believing that the restaurant was the "only location where the experience [could] be truly lived."<sup>79</sup> The decision for Pavilion G's location resulted from a very conscious choice, made by Adrià, Buergel, and Noack, about the specific site in which the chef would exhibit his works.

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<sup>73</sup> "Ferran Adrià is the first chef to have his work recognized at Documenta" (Dollase, "2007 Ferran Adrià, documenta 12 at elBulli").

<sup>74</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 36:24.

<sup>75</sup> Roger Buergel and Ruth Noack, "elBulli is a Documenta 12 Venue," Documenta 12 Press Release, June 13, 2007, accessed November 7, 2013, [http://www.documenta12.de/fileadmin/pdf/PM/Adria\\_%20en.pdf](http://www.documenta12.de/fileadmin/pdf/PM/Adria_%20en.pdf) (for a full copy of the press release, see [fig. 4](#)).

<sup>76</sup> Buergel and Noack, *Documenta 12 Kassel*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> McInerney, "It was Delicious while it Lasted," 175.

<sup>78</sup> elBulli, "History in the Making, 2007: Contribution in Documenta 12," accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.elbulli.com/historia/index.php?lang=en&seccion=7&subseccion=9>. Additionally, "any other form would have meant foregoing the unique experience of a visit to El Bulli and would therefore not have done justice to Ferran Adrià's complex culinary art" (Buergel and Noack, "elBulli is a Documenta 12 Venue").

<sup>79</sup> Todolí and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 108.

Prior to the Pavilion G, Documenta had never had any of its pavilions outside of Kassel; and while this may seem insignificant, it created a precedent and highlighted the show's ability to break traditional rules and do as it pleased. It reminded many that since its inception in 1955, Documenta has had the serious responsibility of defining the contemporary art scene and has wielded the power to reshape popular Taste.<sup>80</sup> Traditionally, large-scale exhibitions and biennials such as Documenta have been used "as a vehicle for both validating and contesting what constitutes the international art world, to explicate artistic practices that have been traditionally subordinated, submerged, or lacking in visibility [in Western art discourse]."<sup>81</sup> Concerning Documenta, the expectations for the exhibition's goals to shine the light on marginalized art forms fell short of the creators' intentions as no significant level of dialogue was produced. Art critic and veteran diner of El Bulli, Adrian Searle, noted that: "with a budget approaching €20m [ca. \$27m USD], the exhibition lays claim to setting the international artistic agenda: Documenta identifies which artists, living and dead, we should be looking at, what ideas and issues we should be attending to, what problems and opportunities art faces at a given time."<sup>82</sup> Such sentiments were widespread, and led Searle to state that the entire exhibition was a "disaster," because "the trouble [was] that so intrusive [was] the installation design, and so confusing the layout, that everything rapidly turn[ed] into a kind of visual sludge."<sup>83</sup> What appears to be most

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<sup>80</sup> Adrian Searle, "100 Days of Ineptitude," *Guardian*, June 18, 2007, p. 23, accessed December 28, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/jun/19/art>.

<sup>81</sup> Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2012), 85.

<sup>82</sup> Searle, "100 Days of Ineptitude."

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. For more reviews and information on Documenta 12, see: Jennifer Allen, "Critics Weigh in on Documenta 12 and Art Basel; Ferran Adrià's Role in Documenta 12," *Artforum International Online* (June, 2007), accessed January 14, 2014, <http://artforum.com/news/week=200725>, and "What is to be Done?" *Artforum International* vol. 45, no. 9 (May, 2007):173-7, 392; and Art Fairs International, "Documenta 12," May 8, 2007, accessed January 14, 2014, <http://www.artfairsinternational.com/?p=205>; Holland Cotter, "Asking Serious Questions in a Very Quiet Voice," *New York Times*, June 22, 2007, p. E29, accessed January 14, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/22/arts/design/22docu.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>; Jörg Heiser, "Mixed Messages," *Frieze Magazine* vol. 109 (September, 2007): 136-9, accessed January 14, 2014,

at fault in Buergel and Noack's curatorial experiment, specifically concerning Adrià, was the manner in which the chef was exhibited and presented to the art world: seemingly as a way to stir up controversy and garner some media attention by featuring something perceived as exotic to the art world (in this case gastronomy and haute-cuisine) all the while putting on a good Show or Event for those in attendance.<sup>84</sup>

It is unfortunate then, that Documenta was poorly curated and failed to live up to its own hype, as it offered a rare and worthy opportunity to initiate a conversation in which visitors could reevaluate the definitions of Taste. This chapter will address Adrià's Pavilion G as exhibited during Documenta 12, in order to highlight the curatorial decisions that resulted in the decontextualization and misrepresentation of the artist, and ultimately allowed him to be assigned a false identity, since the one presented to the show's public was not the one intended to be featured. To demonstrate this argument, journalistic criticisms of the show will be discussed, as well as an understanding of the underlying conceptual elements of Adrià's works, in order to highlight some of the flaws found in the politics of curating contemporary art. This argument will focus specifically on issues concerning public versus private access and the mischaracterization of certain works as *bombastic*. Furthermore, the problems that emanated from the exhibition emphasized the visitor's need for a suitable opportunity or adequate information regarding the pavilion to form their own opinions about the artistic viability of cooking as an acceptable medium in contemporary art. Given that the average guest was not only denied the opportunity to partake in Adrià's works, but were also not provided with the means of

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[http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/mixed\\_messages/](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/mixed_messages/); and Dominic Eichler, "Documenta 12 2007," *Frieze Magazine* vol. 104 (January-February, 2007): 141-3, accessed January 14, 2014, [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/looking\\_forward\\_documenta\\_12\\_2007/](http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/looking_forward_documenta_12_2007/).

<sup>84</sup> Prior to Documenta's opening, many wondered if Buergel had invited Adrià specifically with the purpose of creating a media frenzy and attracting global attention to the exhibition (Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 52:00). Here, "Show" and "Event" (with a capitalized S and E, respectively) are not being used as an alternative word for an art exhibition; rather, they are implying a level of entertainment comparably found when attending a musical concert or a Broadway show.

tangibly experiencing Pavilion G, it permitted the visitors to maintain their prejudices against cuisine's worthiness as an artistic medium.

In addressing what proved to be the unpopular decision to have an off-site pavilion, Adrià remarked that there was no other plausible way for him to partake in the exhibition, and felt as though this "crazy idea" was his only real option.<sup>85</sup> True to his self-effacing nature, he believed that "It would have been arrogant for me to bring my kitchen into the art world. It is much more logical to bring people from the art world here."<sup>86</sup> Thinking realistically, he also noted that "it wasn't possible to move the team and equipment to another place; that would mean we were merely a catering service."<sup>87</sup> Apart from the impracticality of having to displace his entire kitchen to Germany, the choice to establish Pavilion G also averted the problem of Adrià being mistaken as a caterer, since had he transplanted his original kitchen and team to a different location to serve guests, he could be simply regarded as "the help." Furthermore, had Pavilion G been physically located in Kassel, it would have been practically impossible to serve all of the visitors who wanted to experience the work. Additionally, attempting to serve each of Documenta's visitors would have done little to explain the chef's inclusion in the exhibition, as Adrià noted that: "a single dish is nothing, a dish is like a shot in a film. It's nothing. It's the overall experience that counts."<sup>88</sup> For Documenta then, the significance behind Adrià's establishment of El Bulli as Pavilion G as a specific site is evident, since, as one critic put it, "part of [the El Bulli] magic is the location."<sup>89</sup> The entire dining room setting, style of service, ambiance, and even the long and perilous drive to El Bulli, were valued to be a "crucial" parts of

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<sup>85</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 37:05, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>86</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 224-5, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>88</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 40:18, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>89</sup> Lynn Houghton, "Roaming Scribe: Ferran Adrià, elBulli and the Art of Food," *Huffington Post U.K.*, July 29, 2013, accessed December 28 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lynn-houghton/roaming-scribe-ferran-adria-elbulli-and-the-art-of-food\\_b\\_3672747.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lynn-houghton/roaming-scribe-ferran-adria-elbulli-and-the-art-of-food_b_3672747.html).

the overall experience.<sup>90</sup> Such preferences emphasized the significance of the physical environment, and considered that “its identity [was] composed of a unique combination of constitutive physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; [...] existing conditions of lighting, [and even] ventilation,” which were all deemed to be contributing factors when dining at El Bulli.<sup>91</sup>

Every component regarding the site specificity of El Bulli was clearly of great importance to Adrià. He himself has stated that “the cuisine of El Bulli is opera, [...] not theater like at most restaurants. It is spectacle,” emphasizing that everything from the folds of the napkins to the pace of the service melded together to make up the performance that the diners felt they were witnessing.<sup>92</sup> The restaurant’s entire atmosphere enhanced the diner’s experience, where the open kitchen at El Bulli served as a stage on which Adrià became a true performer ([fig. 5](#)). Visitors valued the importance of watching the artist at work, and considered it as significant to their dinner as the taste of the food. For when everything worked together, Adrià assumed the role of conductor with the kitchen staff as his ensemble, and together they seemingly improvised on a scenario and put on a performance.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the notion of the chef as performer, there was a deliberate attempt on Adrià’s part to complement the guests’ dinner with his meticulous attention to detail, including choreographing the movements of the waiting staff.<sup>94</sup> Even teetering on the verge of obsessively controlling, Adrià required that his staff sort and neatly line up every loose pebble along the walkway to the restaurant’s entrance, so

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<sup>90</sup> Hanna, “Customer Feedback not on elBulli’s Menu”; Searle, “Should I Eat it or Frame it?” 4; and McNerny, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 172.

<sup>91</sup> Miwon Kwon, “One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity,” *October* vol. 80 (Spring, 1997): 85, accessed November 30, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778809>.

<sup>92</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 28, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>93</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Making Sense of Food in Performance: The Table and the Stage,” in *The Senses in Performance*, ed. André Lepecki et al. (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2007), 76.

<sup>94</sup> Searle, “Should I Eat it or Frame it?” 6. On an interesting side note, at some restaurants of this caliber, the wait staff is required to take formal ballet lessons as a means of moving more gracefully across the dining room floor.

that the diners could approach a space that appeared as orderly and aesthetically pleasing as possible.<sup>95</sup>

Adding to the overall effect of the dinner as a show was the rate at which the courses came out, as they seemed “to add up to something of a narrative.”<sup>96</sup> One reviewer “even nervously wondered when might be an acceptable moment to get up from the table to use the lavatory—so as not to disturb the choreographed tempo of the courses.”<sup>97</sup> Depending on the observer, the diners could even be considered as either consumers or contributors to the artistry at work, as they could watch the food pass by and voyeuristically see the reactions of those who were about to eat a dish. Though it has been said that the “show” distracted diners from the true taste of the food, Adrià would retort that “decontextualization, irony, spectacle and performance are completely legitimate, as long as they are not superficial but respond to, or are closely bound up with, the process of gastronomic reflection.”<sup>98</sup> Given that such a performance was so significant to the dining experience Adrià intended to provide, it would have been difficult for him to set up his Documenta exhibition in another fashion, since many of the various components that effectively created the experience that El Bulli was renowned for, would have been lost. The final decision regarding the site specificity of Pavilion G, however, was understandable given the difficulties and complexities of bringing Adrià and the contents of his kitchen to Kassel. Nonetheless, the curatorial choice resulted in the chef’s decontextualization from the remainder of the exhibition; as such, both his identities as a chef and as an artist were

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<sup>95</sup> Adrià, *El Bulli*, 55:20-55:41; and Lisa Abend, “Would you be an El Bulli Intern?” *Financial Times Online*, April 8, 2011, accessed January 4, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/34d5381a-5fee-11e0-a718-00144feab49a.html#axzz2pReHF00Q>.

<sup>96</sup> McInerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 175.

<sup>97</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him.” Adrià famously had a ratio of 1.4 cooks per diner, and given that El Bulli only served fifty-five guests a night, each diner was able to receive an unprecedented level of attention from both the dining room and kitchen staff (Todolí and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 57).

<sup>98</sup> eIBulli, “Synthesis of eIBulli Cuisine,” 2013, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.elbulli.com/sintesis/index.php?lang=en>.

grossly misrepresented since Documenta was not adequately prepared to furnish its visitors with proper explanations as to who Adrià was or what he was doing in an art exhibition.

Despite being the highly anticipated and “iconic centerpiece of the show” around which the media clamored, Adrià and his cuisine proved to be more controversial than expected.<sup>99</sup> Much of the debate probably generated from the fact that Adrià and Buergel decided never to disclose how they would actually exhibit the chef, thereby requiring critics and others to speculate as to how Adrià would be included in the show. While this certainly would have been frustrating for those trying to fully understand Documenta’s intentions, it was actually a clever ploy on Adrià’s part to get others to generate a dialogue and discuss the artistic merits of haute-cuisine. Ultimately, this strategy helped Adrià and Buergel to get the contemporary art world to think critically about how the culinary and visual arts actually have a closer relationship and share several intersections than many people give them credit for.<sup>100</sup>

While Adrià’s proponents applauded Buergel’s decision, others criticized it and believed the chef’s inclusion to be an insignificant and flippant choice, and lamented the fact that “as a chef, Adrià did not know his place.”<sup>101</sup> One critic expressed his frustration with what he perceived to be the increasing “banalisation of art”<sup>102</sup> when he stated that: “Adrià is not Picasso. Picasso did not know how to cook but he was [artistically] better than Adrià. What is art now? Is it something or nothing?”<sup>103</sup> In some of the exhibition’s scathing reviews, one critic attributed that “part of the reason why the transformation of cooking into art did not take place at

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<sup>99</sup> Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” 48.

<sup>100</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 40:40.

<sup>101</sup> Pitman, “Yum, Yum.” Many of those interviewed in *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, were supportive of Buergel’s decisions. Furthermore, many of the diners’ written testimonies found in the book attest to how many were originally skeptical about considering Adrià’s status as an artist, and after their experience at Pavilion G reconsidered their position and agreed with Buergel (Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 135-203, and 205-64).

<sup>102</sup> Susan Smillie, “Is Food Art?” *Guardian Online*, May 24, 2007, accessed November 6, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2007/may/24/theatreoffood>.

<sup>103</sup> Keeley, “Is Food Art?” quoting Jose de la Sota.

Documenta is that Adrià's cooking was not already anchored in the stream of commodities and careers constituted by the art system."<sup>104</sup> Another claimed that: "while Adrià may indeed be a genius as a chef, his talent does not automatically turn his cooking into a new form of art, and neither did Buergel's framing of it."<sup>105</sup> Much of the criticism implies that Adrià's exotic identity as an art world outsider was a primary reason for Buergel's decision to include the chef.<sup>106</sup> Such disapprovals of the show primarily stemmed from the misconception that food lacks the capacity to inspire the same form of critical reflection as the fine arts. Arguably one of the larger failures, were the curatorial decisions which insufficiently quelled such thoughts and contributed to Documenta's unsuccessful exhibition of the chef, resulting in the inability to properly generate a dialogue that would attract scholarly attention to the artistic merits of gastronomy, ultimately paving the way to miss the opportunity to reconsider the artistic worthiness of a chef.<sup>107</sup>

Most poignantly, however, was Manuel Borja-Villel's (director of the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona) statement that: "with all respect to Adrià, whom I consider to be an absolutely brilliant cook, I believe that he is responding to a certain dilettante extravagance of [Buergel], who, in my view, conceives of the political space as something merely festive and communal."<sup>108</sup> Borja-Villel appears to believe that Adrià's work was unfortunately presented by the curators, and viewed by Documenta's spectators, as nothing more than bombastic art, which is best defined as an exhibited work "in which accompanying curatorial discourses demonstrated a propensity for increasingly spectacular events and extraordinary promises, far too often

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<sup>104</sup> Vidokle, "Art without Artists?" 2.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Adrià's genre of cuisine is foreign even to most of the hospitality industry, where as the leading practitioner of culinary deconstruction—just as in the art world—is generally viewed as an outsider since very few other chefs practice the same form of cooking, and those unfamiliar with it view it as a misplaced and unwanted Other.

<sup>107</sup> Alisauskas, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>108</sup> Jennifer Allen, "Almere to Demolish Documenta Pavilions; New Museum in Amsterdam?; A Talk with the Director of MACBA," *Artforum International Online* (November, 2006), accessed November 7, 2013, <http://artforum.com/news/week=200646#news12050>.

followed by disillusionment on the part of the visitor as they failed to deliver.”<sup>109</sup> Whatever their original intentions may have been, Buergel and Noack presented “spectacular” works in their exhibition and “promised” to initiate a dialogue in which the event’s visitors could seriously and critically consider the artistic worthiness of cooking.

The bombastic quality of the chef’s work can be understood with his novel beverage, the *Hot/Frozen Gin Fizz* (fig. 6). Here, Adrià dismantled a classic cocktail all the while asking himself “why do we eat hot or cold? Why not hot and cold simultaneously?”<sup>110</sup> The result was a cocktail served at both hot and cold temperatures. “It began hot, but as you drank it, a stream of cold [liquid] slid under the layer of hot [liquid] on your tongue. It ended completely cold.”<sup>111</sup> The uniqueness and shocking nature of Adrià’s food facilitates one’s understanding of how a visitor could misconstrue the chef’s participation in Documenta as mere entertainment, comparable to a magician’s performance at a child’s birthday party. Essentially, the way in which Documenta displayed the artist effectively decontextualized his works—possibly done with the hopes of creating a well-attended event with positive reviews—thereby effacing some of its conceptual elements and original meaning.

The curatorial decisions that accompanied Documenta’s decision to invite Adrià are sadly reflective of a contemporary trend that point to the greater, superficial indulgence of today’s art world. Such events do nothing more than assist “in forming or corroborating the current ‘hot

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<sup>109</sup> O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and Curating of Culture(s)*, 74, referencing Elena Filipovic, “The Global White Cube,” in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, ed. Barbara Vanderlinden et al. (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2005), 66.

<sup>110</sup> Though this quotation is referring to Adrià’s *Pea Soup 60°/4°* (1999)—in which the soup was conceptually similar to *Hot/Frozen Gin Fizz*—in that it was a dish that served at simultaneously hot and cold temperatures. While both dishes may look and taste different, they are essentially the same in terms of experiencing the novel sensation (Jacqueline Friedrich, “A Restaurant of Culinary Surprise—Three-Star Chef Ferran Adrià Creates a Stir in Spain at the Isolated El Bulli,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 10, 1999, sec. A, p. 20).

<sup>111</sup> Similar to the preceding footnote, this quotation is referring to the concept of Adrià’s *Pea Soup 60°/4°*, and although this example might seem a little dull, consider how rarely (if ever) one consumes such a dish (Amanda Hesser, “In Spain, a Chef to Rival Dalí,” *New York Times*, September 15, 1999, p. F1, accessed December 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/15/dining/in-spain-a-chef-to-rival-Dali.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>).

list.’ The ‘contemporary’ value in art and the critical curatorial role are emptied of any political charge and reduced to a commodified and easily consumable trend.”<sup>112</sup> Essentially, “the work of art and the art event conspire to promote art’s ‘entertainment value’.”<sup>113</sup> With Documenta 12, Searle astutely noted that “the only person the world’s media took any notice of during the opening days was Catalan chef Ferran Adrià.”<sup>114</sup> Searle is implying that, in addition to their other shortcomings, it would seem as though Buergele and Noack were only successful in promoting the chef’s participation, and as a result were unable to give an equal amount of attention to the exhibition’s other participants.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the critic appears to be hinting subtly at the fact that Documenta may have encouraged reporters and critics to focus on Adrià in order to better publicize the exhibition itself. Yet, simply because Adrià’s involvement spurred a media frenzy and generated a substantial discussion in the art world, did not mean that the show’s organizers were properly able to contextualize him within the entire exhibition.<sup>116</sup> Given Adrià’s fame and exotic nature as an art world outsider, the choices taken in exhibiting him (including the one asking him “to come up with the iconic centerpiece of the show”)<sup>117</sup> allowed him to be easily presented as an entertainer for the exhibition’s elite and privileged visitors. The problematic outcomes from such curatorial models, is that it effaces—or at the very least, greatly blurs—the

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<sup>112</sup> O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and Curating of Culture(s)*, 75.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>114</sup> Searle, “100 Days of Ineptitude.”

<sup>115</sup> While Adrià certainly did receive much attention, it is also noteworthy that Ai Weiwei equally garnered much attention with his work, entitled *Fairytale*, in which he transported 1001 Chinese citizens (including himself) from China to Kassel for Documenta. Conceptually, Weiwei’s piece was about offering a unique and typically impossible experience for the average Chinese person to experience traveling to Europe and participate in one of the world’s most prominent art exhibitions (Philip Tinari, “A Kind of True Living the Art of Ai Weiwei,” *Artforum International* vol. 45, no. 10 [Summer, 2007]: 452-9, accessed January 2, 2014, <http://philiptinari.com/writing/a-kind-of-true-living-the-art-of-ai-weiwei/>).

<sup>116</sup> In fact, several curators and artists have noted that, in regard to Adrià’s participation, “nothing was explained by the art world” and considered “that [Adrià’s involvement] wasn’t fully investigated” (Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 49:42-51:00).

<sup>117</sup> Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” 48.

spectator's reading and possible understanding of the work, since it is reduced to nothing more than fanfare and spectacle.

What lies at the heart of this issue was the general accessibility, or lack thereof, to Pavilion G. Adrià's removal and decontextualization from Documenta stemmed from the decision to have the pavilion so far from the remainder of the exhibition's other venues, that it created a private space with limited access. Such problems were rendered obvious when it was decided that only a select, lucky few, were privileged enough to be "randomly" selected for a prized and complimentary seat at Pavilion G, as this was believed to be the most effective and fair way for participants to experience Adrià's artistry.<sup>118</sup> The "winners," however, consisted mostly of the elite and influential members of the art world, essentially, those that dictate Taste.<sup>119</sup> Many of those who were fortunate enough to experience the meal came to the conclusion that Adrià's genre of cuisine was worthy of being considered as a viable artistic medium, and proved that the average visitor needed better access to the Pavilion G to properly decide that on their own. Resultantly, many of Documenta's other visitors were not only denied equal access to this experience (since their potential spots were instead awarded to seemingly more important people), but were also deprived of the ability to properly interact with the chef's

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<sup>118</sup> Searle, "Should I Eat it or Frame it?" 5.

<sup>119</sup> "The enthronement of Ferran Adrià at the art fair in Kassel adds nothing to his 'genius,' but instead reveals the foolishness of the guardians of modern-day artistic decadence" (Andrews, *Ferran*, 224, quoting Fernando Savater). The fact that the winners happened to be notable members of the contemporary art "club" also raised larger issues concerning class privilege and exclusivity, as it provided a bleak glimpse into the larger world of art which emphasizes (purposefully or not) distinctions between such audiences. Buerger admitted that he had used no specific criteria in selecting the visitors, and that his reasoning for his selections was based on who he wanted to introduce to Adrià, thereby giving the chef an opportunity to "network" with more established members of the contemporary art world. I personally believe that Buerger also selected those visitors because he thought they were figures who had the potential to further the discussion of the artistic merits of the culinary arts, and the public would take their verdicts more seriously and demonstrate that Buerger was not simply being "foolish" (Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 53:14).

Additionally, an inherent part of such a work and its site specificity is the temporal nature of the piece itself, as it offers a unique element to the visitor's experience; it can be safely presumed that, due to the passage of time, no two experiences would be alike. Such a notion could add to the prestige and boasting rights of the Pavilion G diners, since they could then flaunt their good fortune and reinforce their position as financially and culturally privileged people who experienced a meal at the "World's Best Restaurant."

work, which would have provided them with the opportunity to reach their own conclusions. A critic even commented on the importance of needing to be there in person, as Adrià's "curve balls are easily missed. Some diners, for instance, will have a [twelve]-course meal without noticing that just two courses were hot."<sup>120</sup> So if guests present for an El Bulli dinner were capable of overlooking some of the chef's conceptual elements, it could be reasonably assumed that Documenta's visitors—those who were not able to tangibly experience Adrià's works—had very little chance of understanding the full breadth of the chef's philosophy. As such, many left the exhibition with a misconstrued opinion what *art* could really signify in the culinary *arts*.

In seeming acknowledgment of Documenta's incompetence to adequately contextualize and exhibit Adrià, artist Richard Hamilton and former director of the Tate Modern in London, Vicente Todolí, took it upon themselves to rectify the situation and "dedicated a year and a half of their lives to write [*Food for Thought, Thought for Food,*] a book explaining what cuisine is, as a language, and its possible dialogue with art."<sup>121</sup> In order to do so, Hamilton and Todolí gathered a panel of prominent members from the contemporary art scene, including (among others) Jerry Saltz, Massimo de Carlo, Bice Curiger, Massimiliano Gioni, Carsten Höller, Peter Kubelka, Anntoni Miralda, and Adrian Searle, and offered them the Pavilion G dinner, which was followed by a roundtable discussion to share their opinions on artistic merit of Adrià's practice. These were then compiled into their anthology dedicated to the subject, along with the written reviews and testimonies from the Pavilion G diners, who were asked to comment upon their experience there. The book attempts to provide as much information as possible so that its readers can form their own opinions about Adrià's involvement in Documenta. Adrià himself believes that "this book particularly helps understand that the interesting thing in vanguard

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<sup>120</sup> Hesser, "In Spain, a Chef to Rival Dalí."

<sup>121</sup> Maurizio Cattelan, "Eating Thought," *Flash Art* vol. 42, no. 267 (July-September, 2009): 41, [http://www.flashartonline.com/interno.php?pagina=articolo\\_det&id\\_art=374&det=ok&title=FERRAN-ADRIA-](http://www.flashartonline.com/interno.php?pagina=articolo_det&id_art=374&det=ok&title=FERRAN-ADRIA-).

cuisine is not the backstage as many people belonging to this world believe. What is really important is the final result, the emotions experienced by the people eating in these sort of restaurants.”<sup>122</sup> He has even stated that “this book [is] an icon for the entire world of gastronomy,” as it aids in laying the foundations to carry out one’s own formal analysis of Adrià’s practice and facilitates a better understanding of culinary deconstruction as both a gastronomic and artistic discipline.<sup>123</sup>

Various reactions to Pavilion G proved that *Food for Thought, Thought for Food* was desperately necessary to adequately explain that which Documenta originally should have—the conceptual elements underlying Adrià’s creations, which visitors and critics failed to understand.<sup>124</sup> Evidently, the critics of the Pavilion G (many of whom at never even been to El Bulli) performance had not performed the required analysis of the works at hand to fully appreciate the artistic nature of the event to figure out that Adrià’s participation was not merely demonstrative of Buergel’s “dilettante extravagance.”<sup>125</sup> Buergel and Noack were not merely seeking to make a splash and generate controversy for the value of entertainment; rather, they were attempting to get members of the art community to reconsider their traditional definitions of what constitutes art. Such an exhibition needed to be properly contextualized within a suitable environment, which would have been conducive to enabling the best possible interaction between the spectator and the work as a means of ensuring they had all the information necessary to reach their own conclusion as to the piece’s subtle message.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Adrià himself realized how crucial *Food for Thought, Thought for Food* was in clarifying his participation in the exhibition, as he noted that “when I was first asked to participate in Documenta I was delighted because it [was] all about creativity, and that is my life. But as I became more involved it became sort of a monster. It became very controversial and people were very angry. A storm blew up over my participation. I realized a book was necessary” (Pitman, “Yum, Yum,” quoting Ferran Adrià).

<sup>125</sup> Allen, “Almere to Demolish Documenta Pavilions,” quoting Manuel Borja-Villel.

Critically thinking about food, which is what Adrià strove to do, reminds one that it is a subject that is popularly recognized to have the capacity to shed light on cultural histories and preferences.<sup>126</sup> Yet, popular belief dictates that food alone does not permit discussions concerning socio-economic or other political factors, which are deemed necessary by some to be components of art. Adrià, however, claimed to believe that “cooking can affect people in profound ways [...]. The act of eating engages all the senses as well as the mind.”<sup>127</sup> The chef’s dishes went far beyond the act of eating, as he used the flavors of his creations to tap into his diners’ minds and force them to rethink their traditional notions of what constitutes food and how it could be prepared or consumed. One of the more vocal critics of Adrià’s participation in Documenta was Jonathan Jones, art critic of *The Guardian*, who wrote that: “in some banal way, it’s easy to say that food is art. [...] What’s more interesting is to ask whether it can be serious art: can it move us; change the way we see the world; make us think about profound matters?”<sup>128</sup> More recently, in seeming acknowledgment of Documenta 12’s incompetence to generate a proper discussion on the matter, Documenta 13 (2012) appeared to have given Jones’ criticism more serious attention by holding panels on the topic, noting that: “food is a basic category through which we can potentially understand many contemporary social, scientific, political, and economic phenomena and problems. [...] Can we, for example, address inequalities of class or wealth?”<sup>129</sup> Adrià’s practice was actually capable of commenting on such social inequalities, and succeeded in doing so during his exhibition since the common visitor could not experience

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<sup>126</sup> Glenn Kuehn, “How Can Food be Art?” in *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, ed. by Jonathan Smith et al. (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2005), 206.

<sup>127</sup> Ferran Adrià et al., “Statement on the ‘New Cookery’,” *Observer*, December 9, 2006, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/dec/10/foodanddrink.obsfoodmonthly>.

<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Jones, “Food for Thought: Why Cuisine or Couture can never Equal Great Art,” *Guardian Online*, April 21, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2011/apr/21/food-fashion-art-cuisine-couture>.

<sup>129</sup> *dOCUMENTA (13)*, “Information: Food,” 2012, accessed December 2, 2013, <http://d13.documenta.de/#/programs/the-kassel-programs/and-and-and/food/>.

Pavilion G, nor were they even provided with any substantial information in Kassel. As a result, Documenta's visitors were not able to see or understand the conceptual element of Adrià's artistry, and led many to dismiss the seriousness of his participation in the exhibition.

In hindsight, Adrià's Pavilion did not seem wholly dependent on the location. Although there was no "right" solution in terms of how the chef should have been presented and exhibited, it does appear as though there could have been other, more practical ways of featuring the chef at Documenta. As he recently claimed in an interview, Adrià conceded that Pavilion G could have followed the curatorial model for his exhibition at the New York Drawing Center in 2014,<sup>130</sup> a show that "focus[ed] on the visualization and drawing practices of master chef Ferran Adrià. The exhibition will emphasize the role of drawing in Adrià's quest to understand creativity."<sup>131</sup> While such an exhibition denies the possibility of truly experiencing El Bulli, Adrià believes that this particular show is the best one in terms of examining his relationship with the world of art, as it is able to present the conceptual element of his work without the need for the actual food.<sup>132</sup>

The curatorial mistakes that led to the misrepresentation of Adrià's artistry paved the way for what would become a lackluster discussion in reconsidering the artistic worthiness of a chef's oeuvre. Buerger even understood that prior to the exhibition's opening, many of Documenta's anticipated visitors had likely never had any significant exposure to contemporary art, and as a result had to find the right balance of providing sufficient explanatory material to the visitors all the while not being "overly didactic."<sup>133</sup> Evidently, this was a more difficult task that Buerger

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<sup>130</sup> "But it's true that what we do in New York could have been at Documenta. But particularly at Documenta 12 they talked about the actual work, but the Drawing Center could have been taken to Documenta. But, in being the first chef invited ever, we felt that it had to be pretty radical. It's a theatre and you watch in the theatre, you go to the opera to see the opera, and gastronomy you live it at a restaurant. We could have put any different details and other things that we wanted, but that's what we decided" (Ferran Adrià, interview by Jean Nihoul, Harvard University, Cambridge M.A., December 2, 2013, see: [Appendix II](#), p. 106).

<sup>131</sup> Littman, "Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity," 1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Allen, "What is to be Done?"

had envisioned. Ultimately, this chapter has hoped to not only have shed light on Documenta's curatorial style which hindered the impact of the exhibition's message, but also to show that works of art must be adequately displayed so as to minimize the appearance of the piece's potentially bombastic qualities. Additionally, adequate and equal access to all visitors was required to initiate the dialogue the curators had hoped to commence. Art cannot be decontextualized from how it was intended to be presented, as it could distort and render ineffective the concept's communicability. As Food Studies scholar Fabio Parasecoli states: "a specific food cannot be decoded based solely on its flavor, visual aspect, texture, or temperature; the full width of its meaning cannot be grasped without analyzing its interaction with other discourses, practices, and cultural texts."<sup>134</sup> Such a statement can be seen as pertinent to the world of gastronomy, and renders evident the need for scholars, curators, and the average museum visitor, to scrutinize how the work they are being presented with actually speaks of an identity or concept—whether artistic or personal—through more than its physical appearance.

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<sup>134</sup> Parasecoli, "Savoring Semiotics," 655.

## CHAPTER II

### **Genius, Taste, and Objective Pleasure in Culinary Deconstruction**

[t]aste does play an important role, but it is not a key element in the way Adrià constructs his meals. Adrià instead seems to be more interested in provoking the senses as a way to get to your brain and vice versa: you cannot be distracted when eating one of his dishes; he demands your absolute attention, the dinner has to be the absolute protagonist. Even the shape of the dishes is not merely decorative; instead it is aimed at complicating the relationship that ties your senses to your brain. The way in which the ingredients are de-structured and recomposed in an unconventional way, so that, for example, a leaf can taste like oyster, is a precise message that Adrià sends to his guests, as though he were saying: ‘It is not your brain, my guest, but your senses that you should trust to understand what you are eating. The shape, no matter how complex, should not influence you.’<sup>135</sup>

—Davide Paolini

Until recently, the culinary arts have never philosophically been considered a “high art” in the history of both aesthetics and the arts, which is to say it has never been deemed on par with painting or sculpture.<sup>136</sup> Such beliefs are still prevalent in today’s art world, as was seen when Adrià’s participation and use of comestibles as a medium proved to be a contentious issue during Documenta. This chapter will address the scholarly criticisms of Pavilion G, which philosophically argues against the artistic worthiness of the culinary arts. To demonstrate this chapter’s thesis and show that Adrià’s participation in the exhibition can be contextualized within the established art-historical discourse, the first *four moments* of Immanuel Kant’s (1724-1804) *Analytic of the Beautiful*, as well as his notion of *genius*, will be discussed in order to argue that the chef’s creations are products of artistic genius and are capable of meeting Kant’s stringently objective criteria for being perceived as works of art, and as such, can be objects of good *taste*.

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<sup>135</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 239.

<sup>136</sup> See [footnote 64](#).

While some of Kant's opinions on the matter might appear to be easily refutable, his many works and their impact have reinforced an art-historical bias against the gustatory use of food as a valid medium of artistic expression.<sup>137</sup> The hierarchical separation between the culinary and visual arts began in the Renaissance, and was furthered by Kant, not only through his active involvement in the formation of art history as an academic discipline, but also because he has been one of the few, early philosophers who was able to succinctly address and explain matters of beauty.<sup>138</sup> Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* became a foundational piece in the realm of aesthetics, art, and art history, and has had a permeating influence among scholars and critics in the field. Kant's bearing on the arts, however, was not limited to his methodological arguments on matters of Taste. For instance, his theory on the Sublime was initially published in 1763 under the title, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, where he argued that a viewer experiences the feeling of the *Sublime* when his rational and imaginative faculties attempt to understand the grandeur of natural events in opposition to man's mortality; but the mind subsequently fails in this task as it cannot apply any determinate concepts to figure out the occurrence.<sup>139</sup> Ultimately, the sensation of failure to grasp such a notion is replaced with one of pleasure and delight, as the mind is stimulated into trying to figure out the matter in an attempt to comprehend it all.<sup>140</sup> While his other works on the arts have had a significant impact on the

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<sup>137</sup> Jonathan Jones, "Food can be Artistic - But it can never be Art," *Guardian*, May 16, 2007, p. 3, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2007/may/17/foodcanbeartisticbutitca>, and "Food for Thought"; Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 54-60; Sweeney, "Can a Soup be Beautiful?" 120-3, and "Hunger is the Best Sauce: The Aesthetics of Food," in *The Philosophy of Food*, ed. David M. Kaplan (Berkeley, C.A.: University of California Press, 2012), 52-68; and Christopher Turner, "Dinner with Kant," *Cabinet Magazine* vol. 33 (Spring, 2009), accessed March 12, 2014, <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/33/turner.php>.

<sup>138</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 54-60.

<sup>139</sup> Patricia M. Matthews, "Kant's Sublime: A Form of Pure Aesthetic Reflective Judgment," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 54, no. 2 (Spring, 1996): 168, accessed October 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/431088>.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

discipline, it is important to acknowledge and to know that his theoretical arguments have been indirectly influential in the shaping of the contemporary art-historical discourse.

Kant's prejudice against the artistic value of food was evident even during Documenta 12; when Jonathan Jones stated in a review that Adrià's dishes could never attain the status of art because they not only lacked the capacity to evoke feelings of death or disgust, but they also failed to stimulate the viewer's mind and encourage the type of critical thought that arises from viewing fine art.<sup>141</sup> Despite never having dined at El Bulli, Jones noted that:

in some banal way, it's easy to say that food is art. What's more interesting is to ask whether it can be serious art: can it move us; change the way we see the world; make us think about profound matters? [...] Art is of the mind; it is ethereal. Everything it gives us it gives to our brains. Food fails to be serious art because it is trapped in the physical world.<sup>142</sup>

The underlying argument in Jones's piece appears to derive from that of Kant's rhetoric found in his *Critique of Judgment*. Written in 1790, Kant dedicated a significant portion of his treatise to establishing an objective philosophical foundation for making judgments on beauty, or equivalently, judgments on Taste. Issues pertaining to artistic and aesthetic beauty are best discussed in the portion entitled the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, in which Kant outlines the core of his argument in the four moments, and contends that each moment is applicable in deciding whether an object can be considered beautiful.<sup>143</sup> His theory of beauty can be seen as addressing a dilemma regarding the objectivity and judgment of an aesthetic experience. According to Kant, a judgment of Taste is aesthetical, by which he means that such a conclusion is based on a feeling of pleasure or displeasure as related to the presentation of the object.<sup>144</sup> "In saying [an object] is *beautiful* and in showing that I have [T]aste, I am concerned, not with that

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<sup>141</sup> Jones, "Food can be Artistic - But it can never be Art," and "Food for Thought."

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., "Food for Thought."

<sup>143</sup> Specifically found in the subchapter known as the "Analytic of the Beautiful," in Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 37-202.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 37.

in which I depend on the existence of the object, but with that which I make out of this representation in myself.”<sup>145</sup> Therefore, it is not the physical nature of the object itself which satisfies or dissatisfies, rather it is the feelings produced by the object that cause sensations of pleasure and permit the spectator to proclaim a verdict on the object’s beauty. When making judgments in regard to the Documenta dinner, it was not the taste of Adria’s compositions that led directly to the pleasurable feelings discussed by Kant; rather, it was the spectrum of emotions being elicited through both the totality of the dining experience and the food’s flavors, which generated the enjoyable sensory responses.

Yet before an object can even be considered as worthy of being judged for its beauty, Kant stipulates that “beautiful arts must necessarily be considered as arts of *genius*”;<sup>146</sup> stating that beautiful art can only be created by a genius. He specifies that *originality*, *exemplarity*, *inexplicability*, and *naturality* be requisite characteristics of a genius, a term he defines as “a *talent* for producing that for which no definite rule can be given.”<sup>147</sup> Kant describes the four preceding terms as such: originality as a feature which emphasizes the person as a creator and trend-setter, as opposed to an imitator or follower; exemplarity as when the originality of genius becomes an exemplary model for others; inexplicability is described as an attribute wherein a genius cannot scientifically explain the thought process behind creating beautiful art, nor can it be explained or taught to others so that they may emulate the same type of thought; and naturality as a trait whereby the medium of genius is governed by the rules of nature.<sup>148</sup> Once the creator of the object in question has been deemed of possessing these four qualities, Kant’s four moments must be found to be applicable to the object if it is to be deemed beautiful.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 38-9.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 150-1.

Each of Kant's four moments are distillable into their own arguments, with the first moment being the judgment of Taste according to *Quality*, where "[T]aste is the faculty of judging of an object or a method of representing it by an entirely *disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called beautiful";<sup>149</sup> second, according to *Quantity*, where "the beautiful is that which pleases *universally*, without a concept";<sup>150</sup> third, according to *Relation*, where "beauty is the form of the *purposiveness* of an object, so far as this is perceived in it without any representation of a purpose";<sup>151</sup> and last, according to *Modality*, where "the beautiful is that which without any concept is cognized as the object of a *necessary* satisfaction."<sup>152</sup> As I will demonstrate, Adrià can not only be defined as a genius, but his creations can also be reconciled with Kant's four moments.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines genius as a "native intellectual power of an exalted type, such as is attributed to those who are esteemed greatest in any department of art, speculation, or practice; instinctive and extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation, original thought, invention, or discovery."<sup>153</sup> Such a definition within today's society carries a certain significance which some might find unsettling, as it denotes the term's possessor to be exceptional and far superior to others in regards to the relevant task or talent at hand. While some refer to Adrià as a genius, in the context of this chapter, I will use this word strictly in the Kantian sense, devoid of any contemporary connotations and problems associated with labeling someone as such, from this point onward.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>153</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Genius," accessed October 12, 2013, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/view/Entry/77607?redirectedFrom=genius>.

<sup>154</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 13, and 29-30.

In his argument, Kant first stipulated that a genius must be original,<sup>155</sup> essentially stating that the person exhibiting this trait must not copy and be “entirely opposed to the *spirit of imitation*.”<sup>156</sup> While such a notion might seem to be impossible given that nearly all dishes are variations and interpretations of each other, Adrià took the idea of originality to heart and structured his entire culinary philosophy around it, which permitted him to create 1846 new and never-before-seen creations.<sup>157</sup> Early in his career, Adrià attended a conference where chef Jacques Maximin<sup>158</sup> was giving a lecture and eventually took questions from the audience, where one of the spectators asked Maximin what “creativity” meant, to which the chef responded: “creativity means not copying.”<sup>159</sup> Adrià later said that “this simple sentence was what brought about a change in approach in our cooking [at El Bulli], [...] and was the cut-off point between ‘re-creation’ and a firm decision to become involved in creativity.”<sup>160</sup> Maximin’s comments profoundly affected Adrià, and led him to the realization that up until that point, he had simply been “reproducing dishes.”<sup>161</sup> From that moment on, he strove to create dishes that had never before been seen or tasted, thereby deviating from the traditional culinary path most other chefs followed.<sup>162</sup> One of the diners from Pavilion G even noted that “he is trying to break all the rules, and to invent everything from scratch, [...] and it’s on such a pure, intense, imaginative level that

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<sup>155</sup> “Genius is a *talent* for producing that for which no definite rule can be given; it is not a mere aptitude for what can be learnt by a rule. Hence *originality* must be its first property” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 150).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>157</sup> Adrià meticulously cataloged all of his 1846 dishes, and has published them in several book series (Littman, “‘Notes’ on *Notes on Creativity*,” 9).

<sup>158</sup> Jacques Maximin is “a chef whom the *Guide Gault/Millau* has [...] called [...] ‘the Bonaparte of ovens.’ Arguably the most original of what might be called nouvelle cuisine’s second generation [...]– Maximin was famously inventive [...], his restaurant [*Le Bistrot de la Marine*,] was considered by some to be the best in [France]” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 112).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-3.

<sup>160</sup> McInerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 172. Additionally, the idea that “creativity means not copying,” is one that is “central to the modernist preoccupation with newness, rather than postmodern notions of simulation (Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 1983) and pastiche (Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1984),” further attesting to Adrià’s quest for originality (de Solier, “Liquid Nitrogen Pistachio,” 160).

<sup>161</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 6:38, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>162</sup> “[Adrià] had the inspiration and the innate ability to reimagine the most basic culinary processes, expanding the vocabulary of the kitchen beyond our wildest imaginations” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 25).

it wipes out all the imitators.”<sup>163</sup> Adrià was so original and imaginative in the formation of his compositions that no one could conceive of how he created them and would likely be unsuccessful in emulating him.

In addition to being original, Kant further required that a genius must be exemplary.<sup>164</sup> The ideas and creations of a genius can and should serve as models “to be followed, by another genius; [for] whom it awakens to a feeling of his own originality and whom it stirs so to exercise his art in freedom from the constraint of rules, that thereby a new rule is gained for art, and thus his talent shows itself to be exemplary.”<sup>165</sup> In serving as a model, the genius is effectively furthering the arts by stimulating others into conceiving their own ideas. From the outset of his popularity, Adrià became a source of inspiration to all younger chefs;<sup>166</sup> so much so that many members of the staff (approximately seventy-five of them, from all corners of the globe) at El Bulli were actually unpaid interns who came to apprentice at the restaurant for six-months, simply to try and learn what they could from the chef.<sup>167</sup> Clearly, Adrià was—and still is—regarded as an exemplary model for other chefs to be motivated by.

Kant then went on to say that the formation of a genius’ ideas must be inexplicable (even by the genius).<sup>168</sup> He believed this to be a necessary characteristic because it is what

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<sup>163</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 241, quoting Bill Buford.

<sup>164</sup> The products of genius “must be models, *i.e. exemplary*; and they consequently ought not to spring from imitation, but must serve as a standard or rule of judgment for others” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 150-1).

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>166</sup> “Hailed as a genius and a prophet by fellow chefs, worshipped (if often misunderstood) by critics and lay diners alike, imitated and paid homage to in restaurant kitchens all over the world, Ferran Adrià is easily the most influential serious chef of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Quite simply, he has changed the game” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 13). Also, see: Hillary Dixler, “Has Ferran Adrià had a ‘Catastrophic Effect on the Younger Generation of Chefs?’” *Eater National* (July 12, 2013), accessed January 4, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2013/07/12/has-elBulli-had-a-catastrophic-effect-on-the-younger-generation-of-chefs-1.php#more>.

<sup>167</sup> For more on the lifestyles of El Bulli’s interns, see: Lisa Abend, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentices: A Season at El Bulli* (London, U.K.: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

<sup>168</sup> A genius “cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products, but it gives the rule just as nature does. Hence the author of a product for which he is indebted to his genius does not himself know how he has come by his Ideas; and he has not the power to devise the like at pleasure or in accordance with a plan, and to

differentiates the ideas of a lay-person from those of a genius; while the average person might be able to illustrate and explain how the work of art was conceived, the genius possesses such a rare relationship between the mental and imaginative faculties that the thought process cannot be explained.<sup>169</sup> Kant's argument appears wholly applicable to the works created by Adrià, for while he can scientifically illustrate the form and chemical reactions behind his dishes, it is difficult to explain how he came up with their conceptual ideas, such as his *Spherical-I Green Olives* ([fig. 7](#)).<sup>170</sup> The *Olives* dish has been said to be both the “portrait of an olive” and one of Catalonia, because “it [looked] like an olive and [tasted] like an olive, but it just [was] not an olive, it [was] a re-made olive, it [was] a completely new form of an olive.”<sup>171</sup> In this example, Adrià created an object that both resembled and tasted like an olive, but was not actually an olive; such a dish had never been invented in the history of the culinary arts, and leads one to ask: how did the chef come to conceive of this dish, and how does one think of creating a new identity for an ingredient? It was due to his culinary travels, where he had the opportunity to see many ingredients used in a variety of manners, that Adrià was somehow able to synthesize these scattered pieces of information and combine their compelling features to concoct his own, signature dish.<sup>172</sup> While the chef's influences are ascertainable, his thought process for how he envisions his ideas remains baffling. Furthermore, Adrià even preferred not to explain his

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communicate it to others in precepts that will enable them to produce similar products” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151).

<sup>169</sup> Ultimately, the inexplicability of ideas is what separates the empirical realm of science from the debatable realm of aesthetics. For example, Louis-Camille Maillard discovered the Maillard reaction (which is the chemical reaction that takes place in food and produces the flavorful brown crust on the ingredient being cooked; see: L. Robert, J. Labat-Robert, and A.M. Robert, “The Maillard Reaction: From Nutritional Problems to Preventive Medicine,” *Pathologie Biologie* vol. 58, no. 3 [June, 2010]: 201, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.patbio.2009.09.004>) in 1912, and while this was a brilliant idea, Maillard could not be considered a genius in the Kantian sense of the term since he was able to clearly explain—to himself and to others—how he arrived at the concept of his scientific discovery. So while Maillard certainly was an intellectual, it is probable that Kant would have refused to refer to him as a genius.

<sup>170</sup> Henceforth, *Spherical-I Green Olives*, will be referred to simply as *Olives*.

<sup>171</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 226, quoting Carsten Höller.

<sup>172</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 182-3.

techniques and thought-processes to his guests, as he wanted to ensure the purity of their dining experience, which could be free from any preconceived concepts that the diners might have brought with them to El Bulli.<sup>173</sup>

Finally, Kant argues that the rules of nature govern the medium of genius.<sup>174</sup> By nature, he is referring to a more abstract concept of some unknown but innate quality within a given person.<sup>175</sup> “Since talent, as the innate productive faculty of the artist, belongs itself to nature, we may express the matter thus: Genius is the innate mental disposition (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art.”<sup>176</sup> Essentially, Kant is stating that the imaginative and cognitive faculties that are working together to spur the genius’ thought process are governed by an intangible, natural characteristic. While everyone is capable of experiencing such a relationship between the two faculties, a genius is able to add something to the work of art that provides the viewer with much to contemplate and induces further critical reflection.<sup>177</sup> Adrià clearly exemplifies Kant’s formulation, as he was able to produce ideas (1846 ideas to be specific, as that is the amount of dishes he has added to the global culinary repertoire) that no chef prior to him had been able to think of.<sup>178</sup> His use of culinary deconstructivism and emphasis on the senses permitted him to “[turn] eating into an experience that superseded eating,” and create a novel genre of cuisine.<sup>179</sup>

As noted by several scholars, while a Kantian argument might permit Adrià to be considered a genius, it would not allow for the chef’s creations to qualify as objects of beauty as

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>174</sup> “Nature by the medium of genius does not prescribe rules to Science, but to Art; and to it only in so far as it is to be beautiful Art” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151).

<sup>175</sup> Christian Helmut Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems* (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 99.

<sup>176</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 150.

<sup>177</sup> Helmut Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics*, 100.

<sup>178</sup> Littman, “ ‘Notes’ on *Notes on Creativity*,” 9.

<sup>179</sup> Hanna, “Customer Feedback not on elBulli’s Menu.”

they would be perceived as an *interested* pleasure, not free of any concepts and are *purposive*, and as such do not permit the mind to engage in *free play*, and that they cannot be cognized as objects of necessary satisfaction since they are supposedly not *universally valid*.<sup>180</sup> Kant proposed that a gustatory experience would not lead to an insightful aesthetic encounter, as the edibles one consumes merely instigate “an agreeable or disagreeable sensory response.”<sup>181</sup> Within a Kantian framework, one could speculate that due to food’s nutritional value, it could not elicit a disinterested relationship since eating directly satisfies our body’s desire for food when it is hungry.<sup>182</sup> Kant might also have argued that since one is aware of food’s vital function it plays in human life, it is not free of a conceptualization. Consequentially, food is purposive since we are familiar with and understand it for its role as a biological imperative, food is therefore incapable of engaging the mind in free play. His criticism appeared to endorse the notion that a gustatory pleasure is based on an immediate sensory response,<sup>183</sup> and as such, provided little to stimulate one’s rational and imaginative faculties.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, Kant viewed one’s taste in food as an entirely subjective experience, thereby voiding his conclusion of universality. Kant explicitly states so while using Canary Wine as an example to illustrate his argument:

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<sup>180</sup> For more on this, see: Sweeney, “Can a Soup be Beautiful?” 120-3; and Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 54-60.

<sup>181</sup> Sweeney, “Can a Soup be Beautiful?” 121.

<sup>182</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 44.

<sup>183</sup> Not only was a response to taste immediate, but historically, the bodily senses of taste have been deemed as less important within the hierarchy of the five human senses. Aristotle’s classical hierarchy of the senses considers sight as the highest of the senses, followed by hearing, smell, taste, and touch (see: Robert Jutte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace* [Cambridge, M.A.: Polity Press, 2005], 61). Philosophers have favored the senses of sight and hearing over the ‘bodily’ sense of taste due to the conception that distance (sight and sound are not tangible, and thus assume a sense of physical distance from the object being perceived) from the objects in question permits for more objective judgments, and closeness to the object allows for subjective judgments (see: Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Taste: Modern and Recent History,” *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*: vol. IV, ed. Michael Kelly [New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1998], 361). Such beliefs have been consistently held throughout philosophical history, and it can ultimately be safely presumed that Kant would have adhered to these historical precedents.

<sup>184</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 123.

as regards the Pleasant, everyone is content that his judgment, which he bases upon private feeling, and by which he says of an object that it pleases him, should be limited merely to his own person. Thus he is quite contented that if he says ‘Canary wine is pleasant,’ another man may correct his expression and remind him that he ought to say ‘It is pleasant *to me*.’ And this is the case not only as regards the taste of the tongue, the palate, and the throat, but for whatever is pleasant to any one’s eyes and ears. [...] As regards the pleasant therefore the fundamental proposition is valid, *everyone has his own taste* (the taste of Sense).<sup>185</sup>

Clearly, Kant believed that all the senses had the potential to offer experiences that could be pleasant.<sup>186</sup> Yet, given that such a decision is private and based on personal preference (indicated by saying that it is pleasant “*to me*”), it could not lay claim to being a valid statement for everyone.

Since it has been shown that Adrià can be considered a genius in the Kantian sense of the term, his dishes must now be reconciled with the four moments argument listed above. The chef’s creations must now be subjected to Kant’s first moment, the judgment of Taste according to Quality.<sup>187</sup> Here, Kant implied that the pleasure derived from the object in question is not a product of the pleasurable emotions derived from one’s sensory responses, the object’s usefulness or its moral worthiness; rather, the “pure pleasure” derives from the presentation of the object in question.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, a disinterested judgment of Taste requires that the object be free of any concepts, by which he meant that the object cannot be associated with having any practical or useful purpose, and that the viewer should not be cognizant of “what sort of a thing [the object] is to be.”<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, “we must not be in the least prejudiced in favor of the existence of the things, but be quite indifferent in this respect, in order to play the judge in things

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<sup>185</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 46-7.

<sup>186</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 55.

<sup>187</sup> “Explanation of the Beautiful Resulting from the First Moment: [*T*]aste is the faculty of judging of an object or a method of representing it by an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called *beautiful*” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 45).

<sup>188</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 55.

<sup>189</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 63.

of [T]aste.”<sup>190</sup> Kant later stated that “beautiful art does not permit the judgment upon the beauty of a product to be derived from any rule which has a concept as its determining ground, and therefore at its basis a concept of the way in which the product is possible”; thereby saying that one should not only be ignorant of the object’s concept, but that the viewer must also be unable to determine the object’s origin or how it came to be.<sup>191</sup> Essentially, a disinterested pleasure does not depend on the viewer having a yearning for the object, nor does it produce such a desire—it is not being deemed beautiful because it creates pleasurable feelings; rather, the viewer enjoys an object because it is pre-reflectively judged to be beautiful. Kant placed such an importance on disinterested pleasure because it allowed the spectator to remain objective. Additionally, he states “the beautiful pleases *immediately*,” and specifies that it delights only through “reflective intuition,” stipulating that the emotional response is not based on any immediate hedonic response.<sup>192</sup> Ultimately, the difference in the two forms of responses vis-à-vis the culinary and visual arts is that a beautiful object pleases the mind immediately, which Kant privileges since it is through our cognitive faculty that we understand the world; whereas food pleases the lower senses and is subject to personal preferences since the enjoyable feelings which arise from tasting food are founded on an immediate, hedonic sensory reaction. Based off his text, it could be speculated that Kant would argue that due to its nutritional value, food cannot be disinterested because eating directly fills our body’s desire for food when it is hungry, and such judgments are (typically) immediately subjective, as they tend to be influenced by personal preferences.<sup>193</sup>

At this point, it is necessary to define the various types of hunger as well as their subtle differences, and discuss how they relate to the cuisine at El Bulli. First is *Experiential Hunger*,

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 44.

which refers to the mind's desire to be fed with information or new experiences as a means of further expanding one's knowledge and personal well-being. Such hunger was a particularly emphatic part of consuming Adrià's dishes, as one Documenta diner stated that: "after about twenty unexpected creations, which disturb and puzzle, my tongue could just no longer cope. I thought that I had had enough, that I couldn't eat another thing," after which she goes on to say that "something similar happens to me after [ninety] minutes of intense observation [of art]; I have to go; it's too much for me; I'm saturated."<sup>194</sup> In this example, the diner not only stressed the toll that the food had taken on her mind as she struggled to comprehend and make sense of what she was eating; but she also compared her experience to viewing and appreciating visual works of art, where the mental effort of deciphering a painting was similar to that involved in interpreting El Bulli's creations. Second, *Habit Hunger*, which results from one's eating schedule and arises when the body is accustomed to dining at a certain time of the day (lunch or dinner for instance), and thus, the body expects to be fed. Third, *Hunger Manipulation*, which is the manipulation of Habit Hunger, where one controls and alters the body's intake of food to accommodate a change in one's eating schedule. The latter definition of hunger was applicable to any dining experience at El Bulli, because, in order to guarantee their appetite, diners would manipulate their consumption of food to ensure that they would be able to eat every morsel of the relatively expensive dinner.<sup>195</sup> Last, *Stomach and Body Hunger*, which most people are familiar with as one feels it when the stomach is empty and demands some sort of nutritional sustenance to process into bodily energy. Such hunger was uncharacteristic for the diners who

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<sup>194</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 186, quoting Helga Bender-Wolanski.

<sup>195</sup> Typically, a dinner (including wine) at El Bulli cost 250€, roughly the equivalent of 330\$ US (Carlin, "If the World's Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he'd Starve," 45). It is also noteworthy that Adrià would have had to charge nearly three times that amount to turn a profit; in undercharging his guests, he was able to comment on lack of importance he attributed to financial gain, and that he instead valued making this art form accessible to as many as he could. In order to subsidize his losses, Adrià directed his income from commercial endorsements to fund his restaurant (Hanna, "Customer Feedback not on elBulli's Menu").

ate Adrià's cuisine as they were typically in good financial standing, which can be deduced from the fact that they could afford both the meal and the travel expenses associated with dining at El Bulli. Furthermore, one did not dine at the restaurant to satiate this form of hunger, as another Documenta diner noted that "it was not a meal; it was neither dinner or supper, nor was it food, nourishment or sustenance," while one more said that it "had nothing to do with fulfilling that primary need."<sup>196</sup> Such comments serve to testify that judgments of taste concerning Adrià's compositions were not merely based on the capability of his dishes to satisfy Stomach and Body Hunger, and as a result could be seen as producing feelings of disinterested pleasure. The chef's customers did not come to dine at El Bulli for the sake of their physical well-being, as dinner far surpassed the body's basic need for food since Adrià even took it a step further by providing his guests with nearly forty courses throughout the duration of the five-hour meal.<sup>197</sup>

Once an object could be judged disinterestedly, Kant put forth his judgment of Taste according to Relation,<sup>198</sup> where he defines a "purpose" as "the object of a concept whose meaning suggests a plan or intention,"<sup>199</sup> and further explains that "the causality of a concept in respect of its object is its purposiveness."<sup>200</sup> Therefore, when an object is regarded as purposive, the viewer acknowledges the prospect that it originally might have come about unintentionally, yet still urges the spectator to imagine that it had arisen from a concept.<sup>201</sup> With this understanding, Kant states that a judgment of pure beauty is characterized as having a *purposiveness without a purpose*, by which he means a moment when the object being evaluated

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<sup>196</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 237, quoting Massimiliano Gioni. Others have said that it was "a gastronomic experience as opposed to a meal" (Houghton, "Roaming Scribe").

<sup>197</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 140, quoting Simryn Gill.

<sup>198</sup> "Explanation of the Beautiful Derived from this Third Moment: *Beauty* is the form of the purposiveness of an object, so far as this is perceived in it without any representation of a purpose" (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 73).

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>201</sup> Wicks, *Kant on Judgment*, 48.

comes to the viewer's mind without any specific meaning or role being summoned.<sup>202</sup> It is this moment that seems to be essential to Kant, because the pleasure associated with and derived from pure beauty requires a close scrutinizing of the object in question, so as to guide the viewer's mind to try and interpret—but not figure out—its concept.<sup>203</sup>

While it might seem incongruous to judge food without considering its nutritional function, consider the job of professional wine tasters, who serve as “the model of deliberate tasting without swallowing.”<sup>204</sup> If the tasters were to swallow the dozens of wines they were judging, they would become heavily intoxicated and prove unable to assess properly the wine's quality. To avoid such problems, they merely take a sip and swirl it around their mouths, contemplate the sensations on their palate, proceed to attempt to identify the various flavors, and then expel the wine into the trash. In this instance, the tasters swallow nothing, and as such, the wine is incapable of nourishing them. Though a narrow illustration, wine tasting serves to demonstrate that human beings have the capacity to dissociate the pleasure of food as energy and that of food as *taste* when attempting to make an aesthetic judgment.<sup>205</sup> In relation to Adrià's food, this example provides insight into the chef's thought process when conceiving his dishes, where he was successfully able to separate food's concept as a biological imperative from its taste.

Since the caloric necessity was not given any consideration in the creation of Adrià's compositions, his food could be seen as having a purposiveness without a purpose. As the chef's food no longer had an identifiable, nourishing role, it was also free of concept, and the

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<sup>202</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 56.

<sup>203</sup> Wicks, *Kant on Judgment*, 39.

<sup>204</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 105.

<sup>205</sup> While this argument might seem inapplicable to Adrià's food since wine could be considered a luxury good—and therefore not required by our body—and only useful in that it can intoxicate, consider the health benefits associated with drinking red wine, which in moderation has been shown to improve heart health (Matthew L. Lindberg and Ezra A. Amsterdam, “Alcohol, Wine, and Cardiovascular Health,” *Clinical Cardiology* vol. 31, no. 8 [August, 2008]: 347, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/clc.20263>).

diner now had to reflect upon the food to try and understand what function it served. It has been said that Adrià “asks us—permits us—to look at what we eat and, by extensions, at the physical world in general, in a new way, without preconceptions”; the chef was renowned for being able to disconnect his diners from any prejudices, preconceived ideas, or biases they may have had, and offered them a totally new dining experience for which they had no point of reference in which to frame it.<sup>206</sup> It was in searching for these concepts that the minds of Adrià’s guests would become engaged in free play, for even though “the information given off by a dish is enjoyed through the senses; it is also enjoyed and interpreted by reflection.”<sup>207</sup> The dishes served at El Bulli effectively interacted with the diner’s cognitive and imaginative faculties, and the sensation of pleasure found in the dish resulted from contemplating and attempting to decipher what it was composed of and how it came together.

It is in searching for such a concept that the spectator extrapolates a sense of pleasure; specifically, in attempting this mental exploration of the concept, the mind’s imaginative and cognitive faculties are engaged in a state of free play, and the more the free play, the greater the object’s beauty.<sup>208</sup> Kant’s theory of free play is best defined as the mind’s search for a pre-existing category in which it can classify the new sensory data associated with the object, and as such can generate a type of satisfaction that is disinterested and free of any concepts. Kant favored the notion of free play because he viewed it as a means of increasing one’s worldly knowledge, thereby satisfying one’s Experiential Hunger, an act he understandably deemed to be pleasurable.

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<sup>206</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 25.

<sup>207</sup> “Synthesis of elBulli Cuisine.”

<sup>208</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 25-6.

Take for instance Adrià's *Olives*, which was in a sense a trompe l'oeil piece.<sup>209</sup> Television show host Anthony Bourdain described the dish as an "intensely flavored liquefied olive, somehow suspended in space, contained or held together only by itself."<sup>210</sup> As previously mentioned, the small, grape-like figure strongly resembled and tasted like an olive, but was not actually an olive. As told by one of the Documenta diners, the dish "was served in teaspoon; it looked like a little green egg, a divine little morsel. [The waitress] told me I had to eat it in a single mouthful. So I did; it tasted like an olive, but as if it were oil in a jelly skin."<sup>211</sup> In 2005, Adrià pioneered the technique used for this dish, which he dubbed as "inverse spherification," in which he took the liquid form of an ingredient (in this case, the olive) and incorporated into it a small amount of calcium carbonate (an extract of dark green vegetables such a kale).<sup>212</sup> He then dropped the olive juice into a solution of water and sodium alginate (a derivative of kelp), where, upon contact with the water, the chemical reaction between the calcium and sodium formed a membrane around the orb of liquid, thereby encapsulating the flavor into bead-like shapes. "This made possible a whole new sensory experience for the diner—a literal flood of flavor, of essence, when the sphere exploded between the teeth."<sup>213</sup> Essentially, the *Olive* popped on the diner's palette, thereby flooding the mouth with a strong flavor of olive. In this example, the

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<sup>209</sup> While mimesis is often considered a typical trait of non-art, Adrià's use of this technique is not as duplicitous as has been seen throughout the history of art. The chef uses the concept of mimesis as a playful provocation in order to increase the chances of the diner's mind of grasping the concept behind his dishes. Traditionally, however, mimesis is understood to be an object that is visually deceptive, effectively tricking the viewer's mind into believing that the represented object exists, when in actuality it does not.

Yet the chef does represent his food for what it is: a comestible; so in this sense, there is no deception on the artist's behalf and the diner can trust that the dish is what it presents itself to be. Adrià's trickery and visual puns are only apparent within specific dishes (such as the *Olives* [fig. 7], which looks and tastes like an olive, but is not actually an olive). It is, however, evident that such dishes do not make any attempt to humiliate or insult the diner's intelligence; rather, they are used to provoke critical thought to reveal a larger, hidden concept found in the original dish, and is what Adrià's creations claim to highlight.

<sup>210</sup> Anthony Bourdain, "El Bulli," *No Reservations*, season 7, episode 12, produced by Tom Vitale, aired August 1, 2011 (Chevy Chase, M.D.: Travel Channel L.L.C., 2011): 6:46-7:00, DVD, quoting Anthony Bourdain.

<sup>211</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 151, quoting Gerhard Flögel.

<sup>212</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 184.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

diner had to contemplate and attempt to interpret what the dish was composed of it and how it came together. Involved in this exercise of reflection, the mind had to search for pre-existing models to classify the new flavors or textures; which in turn, required the reshaping of the sensory data associated with it to best fit the mind's already existing concepts to comprehend what it was that was being consumed.

Throughout the course of the dining experience at El Bulli, the diner's mind was constantly engaged in free play to understand and appreciate what was being consumed, as the diners was unfamiliar with all the dishes they were presented with.<sup>214</sup> Scholar Mădălina Diaconu argues that such a concept initially appears rather absurd, given that despite the numerous interpretations of a specific dish, the diner rarely has any complications in identifying the dish's name.<sup>215</sup> Even when the diner is trying a completely new dish for the first time, there is the likely-possibility that the flavors can be classified into pre-existing categories. Such factors lead Diaconu to conclude that “the obsessive and restless quest for the name of the object and the situation in which we eat it for the first time [are] rather rare in the realm of taste.”<sup>216</sup> While Adrià's guests certainly had tasted some of the ingredients before, the manner in which the chef combined and restructured them through his culinary deconstructivist practices allowed him consistently to provide his guests with dishes they had never before tasted, effectively requiring their utmost levels of concentration in order to eat and make sense of his food.<sup>217</sup> He even took painstaking measures to ensure that no diners—regardless of how many times they had been there—would ever receive the same meal twice, thereby not only guaranteeing everyone the

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<sup>214</sup> See testimonies from Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 137-203.

<sup>215</sup> Mădălina Diaconu, “Reflections on an Aesthetics of Touch, Smell and Taste,” *Contemporary Aesthetics* vol. 4 (August, 2006), accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=385>.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Adrià even said that “the concentration you need to eat El Bulli cuisine is very strong, [...], you can't do it everyday” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 250).

possibility of tasting new flavors, but also that they would consistently have the opportunity for a new and unique dining experience.<sup>218</sup> Even though he was reinterpreting well-known and popular compositions, the way he reconstructed them disrupted the mind's thought process, with some diners noting that "it [was] nearly impossible to recognize how the dishes [had] been cooked or prepared."<sup>219</sup> The diners also had no preconceived notions as to what the food could be, since Adrià never divulged the ingredients of each dish. As previously mentioned, the chef had often said that he did not like to explain his techniques or the structure of his creations, as he wanted his guests "to be able to react to his food on a purely visceral and emotional level."<sup>220</sup> As a result, diners could never really know for certain what it was they were eating. Adrià did not even provide them with a menu until the end of their meal (which at that point served as nothing more than a souvenir), since "greater explanation would [have] spoil[ed] the constant stream of surprises."<sup>221</sup> The only bit of knowledge he provided his guests was a set of specific instructions as to how they should properly eat the food, which was his manner of ensuring that the dish's flavors could strike the appropriate taste buds in order to increase the palate's capability of discerning the various ingredients.

Furthermore, despite the stereotypes and rumors regarding Adrià's meals, the El Bulli diners could never anticipate what kind of food or experience they were going to have. Prior to the Documenta dinner, one diner scoured the internet for "hours and hours" to find any information that would be pertinent in helping him fully appreciate the dinner, an effort which proved to be pointless, as he stated that "we had read about [the *Olives*] over a hundred times but

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>219</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 239, quoting Massimiliano Gioni.

<sup>220</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 158.

<sup>221</sup> Searle, "Should I Eat it or Frame it?" 6.

were caught wrong-footed.”<sup>222</sup> As much as Adrià’s guests attempted to be cognizant and aware of what they were getting themselves into, they could never be fully prepared for such a novel dinner. In taking such a series of steps, Adrià ensured that his guests were given all the opportunities to interpret the purity of the dishes on their own, as well as to use their cognitive faculties to decipher what it was that was being consumed, effectively forcing their minds to engage in free play.

An example of how Adrià visually engaged the diner was with the *Olives*. At first glance, the orb-like, jelly structure of the dish did not even appear to be edible. In such an instance, the diner’s cognitive and imaginative faculties were immediately engaged in harmonious free play as the mind tried to process the visual data to classify it into a familiar and known category. Such a feat, however, proved impossible. While it was tempting to make an aesthetic judgment based on the muted and earthy dark-green color of the *Olives*, such an aspect should not factor into one’s decision when judging its beauty as it had no relation to the dish’s form. Kant stated that “in all beautiful art the essential thing is the form,” as he believed an object’s form to be of greater importance than its color, since the latter could be affected by personal preferences and result in an interested pleasure.<sup>223</sup> Yet the color of the *Olives* nearly went unnoticed when contrasted to the peculiar physical shape of the dish. With form now serving as the focal point of the diner’s attention, Kant would allow for the making of an aesthetic judgment.

Additional free play of the faculties ensued with the *Olives*, as it did not provide any definitive visual cues as to how it would actually taste or what its ingredients were, the diner’s taste played an essential role in trying to comprehend the dish. A Kantian argument, however, might dismiss the conclusion drawn from such judgment in regard to the *Olives* since it was a

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<sup>222</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 177, quoting Mark Arendhovel.

<sup>223</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 170. To see the importance Adrià placed on the form of a dish in his creative process, see Adrià, *El Bulli*, 29:25.

mouth taste and was based on an immediate hedonic pleasure, and therefore could not claim to be an object of universal satisfaction, thereby not meeting the conclusion of his second moment, the judgment of Taste according to Quantity.<sup>224</sup> He further claimed that since:

it does not rest on any inclination of the subject (nor upon any other premeditated interest), but since he who judges feels himself quite *free* as regards the satisfaction which he attaches to the object, he cannot find the ground of this satisfaction in any private conditions connected with his own subject; and hence it must be regarded as grounded on what he can presuppose in every other man.<sup>225</sup>

That is, in making a judgment of beauty, the spectator takes it that everyone else who observes the object ought to arrive at a similar—if not the same—conclusion, since it is based on common qualities that all viewers should be able to agree upon.<sup>226</sup> Kant reasoned that this was because everyone “identically projects space, time, and *a priori* concepts,” and that these “empirically real qualities of objects arise fundamentally from how [everyone] projects” such characteristics.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, such a projection “commonly structures our human experience and lends objectivity to our [...] judgments.”<sup>228</sup> Kant additionally stated that judgments of Taste require a type of exemplary necessity, “therefore he who judges with [T]aste [...] may impute to everyone [...] his satisfaction in the Object, and may assume his feeling to be universally communicable and that without the mediation of concepts.”<sup>229</sup> Essentially, one is passing judgment not as an individual, but rather as part of a larger community.

In matters of food, Kant also did not believe that judgments of taste could claim to be universally valid since they were too subjective and that not everyone would follow the same criteria in reaching their verdict. He explicitly delineated his belief by noting that:

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<sup>224</sup> “Explanation of the Beautiful Resulting from the Second Moment: The *beautiful* is that which pleases universally, without a concept” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 54).

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>226</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 55.

<sup>227</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 26.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

though a man enumerate to me all the ingredients of a dish, and remark that each is separately pleasant to me and further extol with justice the wholesomeness of this particular food—yet am I deaf to all these reasons; I try the dish with *my* tongue and my palate, and thereafter (and not according to universal principles) do I pass my judgment.<sup>230</sup>

It is interesting to contrast Kant's statement with that Brillat-Savarin's, who seemingly written in opposition to Kant's statement, and argued that a judgment of food was anything but an immediate and subjective response.<sup>231</sup> Specifically:

taste causes sensations of three different kinds: *direct*, *complete*, and *reflective*. The *direct* sensation is the first one felt, produced from the immediate operations of the organs in the mouth, while the body under consideration is still on the fore part of the tongue. The *complete* sensation is the one made up of the first perception plus the impression which arises when the food leaves its original position, passes to the back of the mouth, and attacks the whole organ with its taste and aroma. Finally, the *reflective* sensation is the opinion in which one's spirit forms the impressions which have been transmitted to it by the mouth.<sup>232</sup>

The diners at El Bulli certainly understood Brillat-Savarin's theory, with one diner commenting that he had "difficulty chasing the flavors around, and identifying their exact origin."<sup>233</sup> Adrià's food engaged the diner's mind in free play by forcing it to try and mold the sensory data associated with the dish and classify it into other familiar categories. Within this rhetoric, it does appear as though Adrià's dishes could have an empirical and objective measurement by which to claim universal validity, since presumably the three stages of taste argued by Brillat-Savarin would apply to everyone.

Finally, there is Kant's judgment of Taste according to Modality,<sup>234</sup> where he states that if a judgment of Taste can claim universal validity, it can be expected that not everyone who perceived the object in question *would* share their pleasure in it and agree with their judgment,

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 126-7.

<sup>231</sup> For more on the Brillat-Savarin/Kant "debate," see: Sweeney, "Can a Soup be Beautiful?" and "Hunger is the Best Sauce," 52-68.

<sup>232</sup> Brillat-Savarin, *La physiologie du goût*, 50.

<sup>233</sup> Searle, "Should I Eat it or Frame it?" 5.

<sup>234</sup> "Explanation of the Beautiful Resulting from the Fourth Moment: The *beautiful* is that which without any concept is cognized as the object of a *necessary* satisfaction" (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 77).

but that everyone *ought* to do so, thereby rendering it an object of necessary satisfaction.<sup>235</sup> In regards to El Bulli's cuisine, such a notion is refutable through an analysis of the restaurant review industry and its proclamations regarding Adrià's food. As they were presumably judging disinterestedly, in making judgments of taste, the critics would expect everyone else who judges the same object or dish to arrive at a very similar conclusion; they were judging collectively rather than as private individuals. In taking their judgment of taste to be universally valid, these reviewers anticipated that everyone ought to share their sense of pleasure derived from the dish and dining experience at El Bulli, thereby rendering it an object of necessary satisfaction.

Highly influential organizations such as *The Michelin Restaurant Guide* and *Restaurant Magazine* make it their job to make judgments of taste. These companies employ a specific range of criteria as a means of reaching such decisions; for instance, *Restaurant Magazine* employs over 900 critics—who are presumably well-versed in matters of gastronomy—to anonymously travel the globe and eat at hundreds of restaurants to establish which are the best in the world.<sup>236</sup> Despite the somewhat questionable nature of such review systems, they still serve to illustrate that there is an empirical means of deciding taste since the critics are either using certain criteria or comparing their restaurant experiences to reach their verdicts.<sup>237</sup> As such, the concept of an empirical form of judgment lends further credibility to the awards given by these companies to Adrià, who earned three Michelin Stars for El Bulli, a coveted award and the highest possible rating Michelin could give, signifying “exceptional cuisine where diners eat extremely well,

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>236</sup> Sue Woodward, “Frequently Asked Questions,” *World's 50 Best Restaurants*, 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.theworlds50best.com/the-academy/frequently-asked-questions/>.

<sup>237</sup> For further information on the debate regarding the validity of such review systems, see: Matthew Fort, “Questionable Taste,” *Guardian Online*, April 29, 2003, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2003/apr/29/foodanddrink.shopping>; François-Régis Gaudry, “Blog : Que Faut-il Penser des World's 50 Best Restaurants 2013?,” *L'Express Styles*, April 29, 2013, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://blogs.lexpress.fr/styles/restaurant/2013/04/29/que-faut-il-penser-du-worlds-50-best-restaurants/>; and Martín Berasategui, “‘Restaurant’ es un Montaje,” *El País*, May 2, 2012, accessed October 23, 2013, [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/05/02/paisvasco/1335987912\\_360246.html](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/05/02/paisvasco/1335987912_360246.html).

often superbly. Distinctive dishes are precisely executed, using superlative ingredients. Worth a special journey.”<sup>238</sup> Evidently, dinner at El Bulli was a unique and up-scale experience. As previously mentioned, *Restaurant Magazine* famously bestowed the restaurant with the title of “World’s Best Restaurant” in 2002, 2006, 2007 2008, and 2009, because it believed that “aside from what’s coming out of the kitchen, the whole experience, from setting to service and wine list, is world class.”<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, the magazine suggested that Adrià’s restaurant not only served excellent food paired with exceptional service (two qualities which can be found at any three-star Michelin restaurant), and that he succeeded in heightening his guests’ dining experiences by getting them to critically think about the concepts behind his creations, thereby truly differentiating and setting himself apart from other restaurants.<sup>240</sup> Additionally, Adrià was bestowed with the title of “Chef of the Decade” in 2010,<sup>241</sup> since he was widely considered to be the most talented and influential chef since Joël Robuchon.<sup>242</sup> Clearly, Adrià’s dishes were able to claim at least critical consensus (near universal validity), since through them, the chef was

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<sup>238</sup> Michael Ellis, “Selecting our Stars,” *Michelin Restaurant Guide*, 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.michelintravel.com/michelin-selections/selecting-our-stars/>; also noted in the book and pertaining directly to El Bulli: “Exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey: one always eats here extremely well, sometimes superbly. Fine wines, faultless service, elegant surrounding. One will pay accordingly!” (*Michelin Hotels-Restaurants 1997, España Portugal* [Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin et Cie, 1996], 57); specific Star rating for El Bulli can be found in the preceding source on page 450.

<sup>239</sup> Rushton, “Bulli for Him,” quoting *Restaurant Magazine*’s “World’s Best Restaurant” verdict in 2007.

<sup>240</sup> Woodward, “World’s Best Restaurants 2009 List”; and elBulli, “Prizes and Awards: List of Prizes Awarded to Ferran Adrià, Juli Soler, Albert Adrià y elBulli,” 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.elbulli.com/premios/index.php?lang=en>.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Robuchon has amassed more Michelin stars than any other chef (twenty-eight in total) and was awarded the title of ‘Chef of the Century’ in 1989 by the *Guide Gault/Millau* (John Preston, “Joël Robuchon ‘I’ve Only Thrown One Plate’,” *Sunday Telegraph*, June 9, 2013, p. 8, accessed November 14, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/10105785/Joel-Robuchon-Ive-only-thrown-one-plate.html>). Additionally, in a 1996 interview with a French news company (*TF1*), Robuchon stated that he “sincerely believed” that Adrià was his “heir” and called him “the best cook on the planet” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 154-5). Journalist Amander Hesser, however, stated it best by saying: “Joël Robuchon, the former chef of the three-star Robuchon in Paris, visited a few years ago and went back to France telling everyone that Mr. Adrià was the best chef in the world. That’s a bit like Picasso coming to see your paintings, then declaring that you’re the best artist in the world” (Hesser, “In Spain, a Chef to Rival Dalí”).

able to consistently earn stellar reviews from multiple review companies, thereby indirectly demonstrating that everyone ought to find the El Bulli experience pleasurable.

In conclusion, Adrià can be deemed a genius in the Kantian sense of the term, and as such, his culinary compositions could be considered beautiful objects, at least in the Kantian sense, since they have been found to meet the requirements of Kant's four moments in the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. The core of Adrià's mission, which he hopes to pass along to his followers, is "the art of giving pleasure through food."<sup>243</sup> In having shown that the chef's dishes can bring about a sensation of pleasure due to their disinterested nature, are also free from concept and have a purposiveness without a purpose- thereby permitting the diner's mind to engage in free play, and can claim universal validity as well as being objects of necessary satisfaction, I have argued that Adrià's creations are beautiful, effectively refuting Jones' criticism and asserting that some of the culinary arts could be considered on the same level as the fine arts. Ultimately, one could reconcile the discussion regarding Adrià's artistic practice within the contemporary art-historical discourse, as the experience offered at Pavilion G is capable of meeting Kant's objective criteria for not only being of good *taste*, but also can be a beautiful work of art. As such, many of the arguments and myths surrounding the controversy of Adrià's participation in Documenta 12 should be quelled and dispelled since he can, art-historically, be considered an artist.

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<sup>243</sup> Carlin, "If the World's Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he'd Starve," 45.

### CHAPTER III

#### **The Man of *Taste***

The meals, long sessions filled with a precisely timed sequence of sensations are closer to literature than any other art form. It is not simply that he has taken the best ingredients and cooked them to perfection, nor that he has created a unique style of preparing and presenting a string of oral pleasures: Adrià's genius lies in his developing and refining a language of food. [...] Ferran's art is linguistic in that he manipulates food as a language that can be remodeled and revitalized so that his creations take their place among other art forms. His genius is directed by an ambition to redefine and redevelop a medium; from monosyllabic grunts he has created a means of discourse, with all the necessary components: vocabulary, syntax, grammar and rhythm.<sup>244</sup>

—Richard Hamilton

Until recently, many people were unaware of the fact that Adrià and the famed Pop-artist Richard Hamilton (1922-2011) were close friends. Hamilton began frequenting El Bulli around 1963 or 1964 (he did not quite remember the exact year), when he began vacationing in the area and went to eat at the restaurant with his close friend, the French Dada and Surrealist artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)—long before Adrià started working there in the spring of 1984.<sup>245</sup> Although Hamilton initially started going to El Bulli to enjoy sea-side picnics, several years later he began ordering food from the restaurant and during one of his meals, noticed a marked improvement in quality, “ ‘the food went up and down over the years (according to the ability of the chefs) and then one year it was up like that,’ Hamilton point[ed] [...] to the ceiling, ‘and that was when Ferran had arrived’.”<sup>246</sup> Incessantly intrigued by the chef's “*tasting* sensations,” Hamilton returned every summer, and is the only person who can proudly claim to have tasted

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<sup>244</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 51.

<sup>245</sup> Andrews, *Ferran*, 99, and 56. Soon after his first visit to the region, Hamilton bought a nearby vacation house in 1968 (Ginny Dougary, “This is Art - in the Best Possible Taste; Can Food be Art?” *Times*, July 11, 2009, section Features, p. 48, accessed February 9, 2014, <http://www.ginnydougary.co.uk/2009/07/16/how-friends-ferran-adria-and-richard-hamilton-inspire-each-other/>).

<sup>246</sup> Ginny Dougary, “This is Art,” 48, quoting Richard Hamilton.

every single one of Adrià's 1846 dishes, effectively proving to have been El Bulli's most loyal customer.<sup>247</sup>

One of the products of Hamilton and Adrià's friendship was the opening essay for *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, for which Hamilton wrote an "elegantly persuasive introduction" entitled *Thought for Food*.<sup>248</sup> In the essay, Hamilton attempted to make sense of Adrià's art and made the effort to contextualize it within the contemporary art-historical discourse.<sup>249</sup> Hamilton "was vocal in his admiration for Adrià"<sup>250</sup> and was known to speak of the chef among his art world friends, as he was not reserved about his long held beliefs that Adrià's "life enhancing epics" possessed artistic qualities.<sup>251</sup> Such statements have given a few critics the notion that Hamilton's "endorsement [...] likely contributed in no small degree to the Catalan chef's controversial participation [...] in Documenta 12."<sup>252</sup> Though such comments are contestable, there is nonetheless a hint of truth to them, as Hamilton did share his experiences from the tradition-defying El Bulli among his many friends and acquaintances, thereby helping to direct the contemporary art world's attention to Adrià's work. In this sense, it could be argued that Hamilton was what the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) might have called a *good critic*, in that the Pop artist had established a standard of Taste by having proven to be a true

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<sup>247</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 7:20, quoting Richard Hamilton (my italics); and Littman, "'Notes' on Notes on Creativity," 17.

<sup>248</sup> Dougary, "This is Art," 49.

<sup>249</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 51-3.

<sup>250</sup> Hettie Judah, "Is Culinary Porn too Mainstream to be a Turn-on?" *Art Review* vol. 64, no. 6 (September, 2013): 39, accessed February 9, 2014, [http://artreview.com/opinion/september\\_2013\\_opinion\\_hettie\\_judah\\_on\\_culinary\\_porn/](http://artreview.com/opinion/september_2013_opinion_hettie_judah_on_culinary_porn/).

<sup>251</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 51. "Whenever I spoke then to people in the art world about Richard, they said that he only talked about El Bulli" (Dougary, "This is Art," 49, quoting Ferran Adrià).

<sup>252</sup> Judah, "Is Culinary Porn too Mainstream to be a Turn-on?"

judge of *taste*, which as Hume advocates, should encourage others with lesser Taste to emulate their judgments after his.<sup>253</sup>

One possible reason for Hume's decision to focus on the critic—as opposed to the art object—when making judgments of Taste, was because of what he might have perceived as society's desperate need for a critic that all would respect. Hume and other eighteenth century philosophers who studied matters of *taste* would have been aware (especially in England) of how technology, and more specifically, the printing press, was affecting their day-to-day lives.<sup>254</sup> The ability to print in large quantities not only permitted writers to facilitate the dissemination of their latest works, but it also gave rise to journalism, thereby giving birth to the role of the professional critic.<sup>255</sup> The critic has always been regarded as an important figure within society, and is a person who the public expects to predict whether they will enjoy that which has been reviewed.<sup>256</sup> Despite the era's apparent “progress,” Hume and his contemporaries likely would have found themselves overwhelmed with bad reviews; not “bad” in the sense that they were poorly written (though they could have been), but “bad” in that they were judgments being made by critics who were either uneducated or insufficiently informed as to that which they were judging, thereby demonstrating that their Taste would not be an accurate prediction for what others might like. Hume's predicament is not unlike one we are facing in the twenty-first century, as the internet has created countless outlets for a person to share their opinions with the world instantly. In considering such factors, Hume's essay could be seen as addressing the

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<sup>253</sup> The fact that the characteristics of the good critic are “valuable and estimable will be agreed in by all mankind,” and are therefore traits which everyone should attempt to acquire (David Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller [Indianapolis, I.N.: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1987], essay XXIII, paragraph 26, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Hume/hmMPL23.html>).

<sup>254</sup> Martin Conboy, *Language of Newspapers: Socio-Historical Perspectives* (London, U.K.: Continuum International Publishing, 2010), 13-32.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-54.

<sup>256</sup> Jeremy Iggers, “Who Needs a Critic? The Standard of Taste and the Power of Branding,” in *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry*, ed. Fritz Allhoff et al. (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 88-101.

dilemma of figuring out and establishing who the good critics were, so that they could establish a standard of Taste that others would follow. Essentially, a recognized and accepted critic would serve as a point of reference that society could measure itself against to evaluate its own sense of *taste*, which it could then improve upon, ultimately creating a cyclical effect that serves to ensure the forward progression of humanity since everyone would continuously strive to exceed or outdo the previous benchmark.

This chapter will address Hamilton's influence on Adrià's career, and how it increased the art world's perception of the chef as an artist. To demonstrate this argument, Hume's essay, "Of the Standard of Taste," will be used to demonstrate that Hamilton is a good critic strictly in the Humean sense of the term. This chapter will not be making any presumptions as to Hamilton's abilities to be a good gustatory or restaurant critic, as the artist's judgments of taste concerning the Pavilion G dinner will not be considered. Instead, I make the claim that Hamilton, in being a good critic in matters of aesthetics, based his judgment of Taste on Adrià's cuisine concerned itself with the artistic nature of the experience offered during the Documenta dinner, thereby implying that the chef's creations were being considered within an artistic context—as opposed to a gastronomic one. In being a good Humean critic, Hamilton can be recognized as a critic capable of setting a universal standard of Taste, ultimately allowing Adrià's art to be deemed worthy of being considered as embodying good *taste*.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Though scholars have identified problems and inconsistencies in Hume's essay, those issues will not be addressed in this paper as they are beyond its scope. This paper will strictly focus on contextualizing Hamilton within Hume's criteria of being a good critic. For the disagreements on the logic of Hume's argument, see: Jerrold Levinson, "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem," in *Contemplating Art: Essays in Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 366-87, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199206179.003.0023>; Brian Ribeiro, "Hume's Standard of Taste and the De Gustibus Sceptic," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 47, no. 1 (January, 2007): 16-28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayl036>; James Shelley, "Hume's Double Standard of Taste," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 52, no. 4 (Autumn, 1994): 437-45, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/432031>; Timothy M. Costelloe, "Hume, Kant, and the 'Antinomy of Taste'," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 41, no. 2 (April, 2003): 165-85, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hph.2003.0007>; and Richard Shusterman, "Of the Scandal of Taste: Social Privilege as Nature in the Aesthetic Theories of Hume and

Hume notably authored “Of the Standard of Taste” in 1758, in which he attempted to establish a universal and conclusive standard for making a judgment of Taste.<sup>258</sup> Though his objective initially appears to be similar to that found in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790),<sup>259</sup> Hume approached the subject in a decidedly different manner, as he understood that “the number of tastes [are] infinite.”<sup>260</sup> As such, he focused on the subjective nature of Taste and sought to define—as “it is natural for us to” do—“a Standard of Taste; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.”<sup>261</sup> Although Hume had never been a prolific writer on matters of aesthetics, his essay (as was Kant’s) was one of several eighteenth century European philosophical treatises that sought to establish a “standard” method of judgment for pronouncing verdicts of Taste.<sup>262</sup> As one of the pioneering philosophers in the field, Hume significantly affected the shaping of the today’s art-historical discourse, as his seminal text is now considered an iconic piece in the disciplines of aesthetics and art history.<sup>263</sup>

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Kant,” in *Eighteenth Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art*, ed. Paul Mattick Jr. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 96-119, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511983801.004>.

<sup>258</sup> Shusterman, “Of the Scandal of Taste,” 211.

<sup>259</sup> It has been argued that Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* was actually written in response to Hume’s “Of the Standard of Taste” due to the overly subjective nature of the latter’s argument, see: Manfred Kuehn, “Kant’s Conception of ‘Hume’s Problem,’” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 21, no. 2 (April, 1983): 175–93, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hph.1983.0051>; Lewis White Beck, *Essays on Kant and Hume* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1978); Peter Kivy, “Hume’s Standard of Taste: Breaking the Circle,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* vol. 7, no. 1 (1967): 57-66, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/7.1.57>; Jens Kulenkampff, “The Objectivity of Taste: Kant and Hume,” *Noûs* vol. 24, no. 1 (March, 1990): 93-110; Peter Jones, “Hume’s Literary and Aesthetic Theory,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. David Fate Norton, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 255-80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521382734.009>; E. F. Carritt, “The Sources and Effects in England of Kant’s Philosophy of Beauty,” *Monist* vol. 35, no. 2 (April, 1925): 315-28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5840/monist192535214>; and Theodore A. Gracyk, “Kant’s Shifting Debt to British Aesthetics,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* vol. 26, no. 3 (1986): 204–17, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/26.3.204>.

<sup>260</sup> Brillat-Savarin, *La physiologie du goût*, 48.

<sup>261</sup> Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” paragraph 6.

<sup>262</sup> See [footnote 64](#).

<sup>263</sup> Hume has had such an impact that over “the last twenty years or so, a large number of studies [...] have been devoted to explicating and commenting on Hume’s celebrated essay” (Levinson, “Hume’s Standard of Taste,” 366). Others who have written on the subject include (but not limited to): Noel Carroll, “Hume’s Standard of Taste,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 43, no. 2 (Winter, 1984): 181-94, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/429992>; Theodore Gracyk, “Delicacy in Hume’s Theory of Taste,” *Journal of Scottish*

In an attempt to quell debates on matters of aesthetic beauty, Hume's solution to establishing a standard of Taste was to refer to the judgments of a man of Taste, or a good critic, who exemplified numerous and desirable characteristics that all should aspire to emulate.<sup>264</sup> Hume condensed the multiple features of the good critic into a simpler and more encompassing one, which he dubbed "delicacy of [T]aste."<sup>265</sup> For Hume, *delicate Taste* was a trait in which a critic's "organs [of Taste were] so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition," thereby inferring that the person in question had a superior sense of Taste when compared to others.<sup>266</sup> When one possessed such a delicacy of Taste, admiring works whose "compositions [were] chiefly calculated to please the imagination" roused certain feelings of pleasure within the viewer that were not the product of any tangible features found in the object being evaluated.<sup>267</sup> As with Kant's theory, Hume believed that beauty was not an actual property of the object; rather, it was the feelings produced by the object that could be considered beautiful.<sup>268</sup>

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*Philosophy* vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring, 2011): 1-16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/jsp.2011.0003>; Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Hume and the Foundations of Taste," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 35, no. 2 (Winter, 1976): 201-15, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/430377>; Christopher MacLachlan, "Hume and the Standard of Taste," *Hume Studies* vol. 12, no. 1 (April, 1986): 18-38, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hms.2011.0640>; David Marshall, "Arguing by Analogy: Hume's Standard of Taste," *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 28, no. 3 (Spring, 1995): 323-43, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2739452>; H. Osborne, "Hume's Standard and the Diversity of Aesthetic Taste," *British Journal of Aesthetics* vol. 7, no. 1 (1967): 50-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/7.1.50>; and Roger A. Shiner, "Causes and Tastes: A Response," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* vol. 55, no. 3 (Summer, 1997): 320-4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/431805>.

<sup>264</sup> "A delicate [T]aste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality; because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can ascertain a delicacy of [T]aste, it is sure to meet with approbation; and the best way of ascertaining it is to appeal to those models and principles, which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages" (Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 18).

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>268</sup> Hume states that "no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty" (*ibid.*, 8), "thus, 'beauty' refers to no quality in objects at all; it simply refers to the pleasure a percipient takes in certain situations" (Korsmeyer, "Hume and the Foundations of Taste," 202).

Hume was of the opinion that any judgment was an expression of one's personal feelings, or *sentiment*. Moreover, since judgments of Taste are really just "general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages," everyone is capable of being a critic and can ultimately never be wrong;<sup>269</sup> thereby insinuating that beauty is actually in the eye of the beholder.<sup>270</sup> Due to the seemingly infallible nature of emotions and the resulting logic that it would be impossible for a standard to exist if everyone was always right, it appears that establishing a standard of Taste rests on the notion that "all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application" of a word's meaning so as to create a universal vocabulary that all could adhere by.<sup>271</sup> As with most words, nearly everybody will have a differing opinion as to what the exact definition of beauty is; although two critics might agree to use the same word to describe an object, their meanings will each vary slightly, thereby rendering their explanations (and therefore their verdicts) worthless, as they are unable to reach a consensus as to their evaluation. Hume was aware of the predicament, as he understood that it would be impossible to get all of humankind to agree on strict definitions for every word, since "to seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an enquiry, as pretending to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter."<sup>272</sup> Hume then addressed a problem that emerged from the impossibility of establishing a universal vocabulary, which lies in accepting one critic's verdict on Taste over another.

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<sup>269</sup> Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 10.

<sup>270</sup> "All sentiment is right" (ibid., 8).

<sup>271</sup> "The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same," and is why everyone who speaks the same "tongue, must agree in" the word's definition (ibid., 2).

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 8.

There are few convincing arguments as to why those with inferior and “barbarous” Taste ought to trust someone else’s sense of Taste, and were issues Hume was well aware of.<sup>273</sup> To circumvent the problem that “few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty,” he proposed that good critics should actually set the standard of Taste, and anyone who desired to possess good Taste needed to seek them out and emulate their preferences.<sup>274</sup> In pursuing such a methodology, Hume neglected to provide any models or standards of measurement used to evaluate a work of art, thereby leaving no objective means by which one could assure oneself of one’s judgment. Although there are no criteria that one can employ to designate a beautiful object, there are certain principles that are applicable to finding and isolating the good critic. Essentially, reaching a standard rests on determining what characteristics a good critic possessed, because even though “among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it.”<sup>275</sup> Ultimately, herein lies the most important challenge facing Hume, that of explicating who is the critic who possesses the one verdict that is “just and true.” He elaborated by claiming that a true judge of Taste must possess *good sense* and *delicacy of Taste*, be free of *prejudice*, have *experience* in both observing the genre of objects in question (which is what Hume calls “practice”), as well as in *comparing* said objects against one another to better ascertain their beauty.<sup>276</sup>

As I intend to demonstrate, Hamilton exemplified Hume’s five characteristics for being a good critic, and as such, was a person after whom one ought to model their judgments on *taste*. Yet before delving any deeper into Hume’s argument and contextualizing Hamilton within the

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<sup>273</sup> “We are apt to call barbarous whatever departs from our own [T]aste and apprehension: but soon find the epithet of reproach restored on us” (ibid., 1).

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 24.

philosopher's requisite criteria for being a good critic, it is necessary to give a brief account of Hamilton's life and artistic career, so as to lay the necessary framework to later argue why one ought to mirror his judgments on *taste*. I will take this opportunity to show that Hamilton's opinion was highly influential and had the potential for a wide reaching impact in the contemporary art world. Many consider Hamilton to be the founder of the Pop Art movement, which is generally agreed to have started in England in the mid-1950s which was a term used to refer to a group of artists whose works drew "upon popular culture."<sup>277</sup> Moreover, such works were made in reaction to the Abstract Expressionist movement that had come to dominate the era's art scene.<sup>278</sup> Hamilton is considered the "father" of Pop Art,<sup>279</sup> as he was one of the first who "became aware of the possibility of seeing the whole world, at once, though the great visual matrix that surrounds us, a synthetic 'instant' view. Cinema, television, newspapers flooded the artist with a total landscape."<sup>280</sup> His first major work, *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* ([fig. 8](#)) earned him international acclaim, and "has become an emblem of the Age of Boom, the post-War consumer culture of the late 1950s."<sup>281</sup> Due to his prolific success in addressing such culturally relevant issues, many regarded him to be one of the period's most talented and successful artist, which eventually led to four retrospectives devoted

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<sup>277</sup> Lawrence Alloway, "The Development of British Pop," in *Pop Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publisher, 1973), 27.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Sarat Maharaj, "'A Liquid Elemental Scattering:' Marcel Duchamp and Richard Hamilton," in *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Hal Foster et al. (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2010), 121, and is reprinted from *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Richard Morphet (London, U.K.: Tate Gallery, 1992).

<sup>280</sup> Laslo Glozer, introduction to *Richard Hamilton: Paintings and Drawings, 1937-2011*, exhibition catalog (Cologne, Germany: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2003), 10, quoting Richard Hamilton.

<sup>281</sup> John-Paul Stonard, "Pop in the Age of Boom: Richard Hamilton's *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?*" *The Burlington Magazine* vol. 149, no. 1254 (September, 2007): 607, accessed February 11, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20074973>; and Greil Marcus, "The Vortex of Gracious Living," in *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Hal Foster et al. (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2010), 42, and is a slightly altered version of his piece, "On Richard Hamilton's *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (1956)" originally published in *Pop Art Is* (London, U.K.: Gagosian Gallery, 2007). *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* was submitted as part of the Independent Group's "This is Tomorrow" exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1956. The piece earned him international recognition and was regarded by some to be the first example of Pop Art (Stonard, "Pop in the Age of Boom," 607).

entirely to his work (three at the Tate and one at the Guggenheim).<sup>282</sup> Additionally, he was asked to participate in both Documenta 4 and X (in which he was awarded the Arnold Bode Prize), and was later selected to represent England at the 1993 Venice Biennale.<sup>283</sup>

Apart from *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?*, and the artwork he famously created for the cover of the Beatles' *White Album* (1968), it could be argued that his *Polaroid Portraits* were of equal renown.<sup>284</sup> *Polaroid Portraits* was a four-volume photo album published over the course of his career (1968-2001), with the Polaroids being images of Hamilton, taken by his close friends or famous people he encountered.<sup>285</sup> The Pop icon enjoyed this particular project because "it was possible to express an artist's personality just [by] pressing a button. They didn't think, just the eye, and boom! And somehow, you could see the quality of the artist's side."<sup>286</sup> Each picture managed to capture an essence of the photographers' personality, despite the fact that Hamilton was the common focal point of each Polaroid. Notable friends (among many others) who have contributed to the four volumes of Hamilton's work include Andy Warhol, Man Ray, Roy Lichtenstein, and John Lennon. Due to the fact the Hamilton surrounded himself with such distinguished figures throughout his life, it can be safely supposed that each of these unique characters left their mark on Hamilton in one way or another, and helped provide him with the necessary experiences needed to consistently produce works that have been deemed by many to be of good Taste.

It is no surprise, then, that given the extent of Hamilton's popularity and now well-recognized success, some believe that he was a contributing factor in drawing the art world's

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<sup>282</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 263.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Cooke, "Richard Hamilton."

<sup>285</sup> Joanna Pitman, "Instant Friends," *Times*, November 14, 2001, sec. Features, p. 2; and Richard Hamilton, *Collected Words* (London, U.K.: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 82-3, originally a recorded conversation between Richard Hamilton and G J Lischka published in *Das Sofortbild Polaroid* (October, 1977).

<sup>286</sup> Adria, *Documenting Documenta*, 1:15, quoting Richard Hamilton.

attention to Adrià and his deconstructivist practices.<sup>287</sup> He was so vocal in his praise of Adrià's ground-breaking work that the chef even remarked how Hamilton seemingly bragged about him, for "whenever I spoke [...] to people in the art world about Richard, they said that he only talked about El Bulli."<sup>288</sup> While it could be assumed that he was merely a very enthusiastic fan of El Bulli's delicious dishes, Hamilton never claimed to be a food connoisseur, and even declared that "when I began to experience Ferran, I was interested in what he did and how achieved these strange ideas. [...] I admired it, but it wasn't in itself an interest in food from the point of view of a gastronome."<sup>289</sup> Hamilton's judgments about the pleasures derived from Adrià's creations were not merely the result of the restaurant's tasty food, rather, his interest stemmed from his curiosity in how the chef was reshaping the culinary arts.

Conceptually, Adrià and Hamilton held comparable artistic views on how objects one should view and treat objects, both of them believing that every ingredient or every work of art is of the same value. Hamilton was a proponent of Lawrence Alloway's<sup>290</sup> theory of a "Fine/Pop Art Continuum,"<sup>291</sup> which he interpreted as the notion that "all art is equal - there was no hierarchy of value. Elvis was to one side of a long line while Picasso was strung out on the other side ... TV is neither less nor more legitimate an influence than, for example, is New York Abstract Expressionism."<sup>292</sup> Similarly, Adrià was of the firm opinion that a sardine and a piece of sushi-grade tuna belly were of identical worth; the chef understood that it was his job as a

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<sup>287</sup> Judah, "Is Culinary Porn too Mainstream to be a Turn-on?"

<sup>288</sup> Dougary, "This is Art," 49, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>289</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 5:49, quoting Richard Hamilton.

<sup>290</sup> Alloway is credited with coining the term "Pop-Art," and was instrumental in organizing the *This is Tomorrow* exhibition which helped launch Hamilton's career (Alloway, "The Development of British Pop," 27).

<sup>291</sup> Lawrence Alloway, "Artists as Consumers," in *Imagining the Present: Content, Context, and the Role of the Critic*, ed. Richard Kaline, (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2006), 72, originally published in *Image* vol. 3 (1961): 14-9.

<sup>292</sup> Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 31, originally published in *Slip it to Me: Richard Hamilton Paintings 1956-1964* (London, U.K.: Hanover Gallery, 1964), exhibition catalog.

cook to tease out and translate the beauty of a product so that the purity of each flavor spoke resiliently to the diner.<sup>293</sup>

Apart from both of them sharing similar philosophies on how a work of art or ingredient should be understood, the opening quotation of this chapter indicates that Hamilton believed that the artistic nature of Adrià's art was more closely related to literature than to any other form of art (and is why he preferred referring to the chef as a poet).<sup>294</sup> Hamilton was of the opinion that Adrià was inventing a new culinary grammar for the language of gastronomy, and likened what the chef was achieving to what Shakespeare did in terms of developing and furthering the grammar of the English language.<sup>295</sup> Hamilton's comparisons of Adrià to other great historical figures did not end with the Bard of Avon; in an interview, he even likened the chef to one of his old friends, Duchamp:

I am an admirer, and disciple even, of Marcel Duchamp, and what this man has done is to say, in 1912: 'I'm not going to think about what art was in the past, I'm going to start from scratch, and I will invent an art. What would art be if it hadn't existed before?' And I think, in a way, Ferran has done that. He said: 'what if there were no such thing as cooking or the culinary arts? What could it be? What should it be?' And starting from that assumption, his inventiveness has enabled him to go further than any other chef that ever existed, I think.<sup>296</sup>

While it may seem commonplace to juxtapose innovative artists with creators of Duchamp's ilk, the fact that such a statement was issued by someone who intimately knew the pair lent the comparison a great amount of credibility.

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<sup>293</sup> "All products have the same gastronomic value, regardless of their price" ("Synthesis of elBulli Cuisine").

<sup>294</sup> Todolì and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 51-3.

<sup>295</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 8:01, quoting Richard Hamilton. "Richard always explained that cooking was a language, and that we, at El Bulli, had been successful in creating new semantics and a new alphabet, with new letters and words that didn't previously exist. In this sense, cooking could be understood from this more linguistic perspective" (Littman, "'Notes' on *Notes on Creativity*," 18, quoting Ferran Adrià). Additionally, the idea that Adrià is more of a linguist is reinforced when one is reminded of his culinary deconstructivist practices, harkening back to Derrida's own work on language with his introduction of literary deconstructivism in *Of Grammatology*; see: [Introduction](#), p. 7-8.

<sup>296</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 1:09:48, quoting Richard Hamilton.

Hamilton was one of the early few who was able to comprehend Adrià's conceptual practice from such an early stage, and the Pop artist's manner of explicating it had a significant impact on the chef's career. Hamilton realized that the El Bulli experience went "to another world beyond cookery and normal experiences of eating, and [made] a way for the mind to experience life in general."<sup>297</sup> In having a firm understanding of Adrià's philosophies, Hamilton was able to coherently explain what the chef was attempting to accomplish. Even Adrià finds it difficult to stress the profound impact Hamilton has had on his entire thought process, as he remarked that "Richard was the first man to talk about El Bulli as a new language. I never thought of it that way, but he gave me this explanation and he opened the world for me."<sup>298</sup> Hamilton was the first person to articulate Adrià's practice in terms of linguistical matters, and helped the chef realize that he was actually striving to break down and reshape the established—and stagnant—culinary principles which had become engrained in recent gastronomical history.<sup>299</sup> It would be a challenge, then, to understate the effects that Hamilton had not only on Adrià's career, but also on his way of understanding creativity.

The landmark occasion that solidified their friendship did not occur until 1999, when Hamilton asked Adrià to take a picture of him; little did the chef know that the artist was to add it to his *Polaroid Portraits*' final volume ([fig. 9](#)).<sup>300</sup> Some short time after the photo session, "Adrià was in Barcelona, where he saw a book called *Pop Art*. 'I read, and discovered exactly who that Richard Hamilton [was]. I phoned [a friend] and said, 'Did you know what type of

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 17:15, quoting Richard Hamilton.

<sup>298</sup> Dougary, "This is Art," 49, quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>299</sup> The importance of both their friendship and the creative influence Adrià derived from Hamilton, were paramount in furthering the chef's career, since, "for [him], creativity is not a job; it's a way of understanding life," and Hamilton "made [Adrià] see [his work with the language of gastronomy] as a creative expression. Without a doubt, Richard was a very important in my career" (Littman, "'Notes' on *Notes on Creativity*," 9, and 17).

<sup>300</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 3:50.

artist is that Richard Hamilton? He's an incredible man!' ”<sup>301</sup> Although it took nearly fifteen years for Adrià to comprehend just who his most dedicated customer actually was, the chef eventually came to the realization that Hamilton was a man of *taste*.

Given the “rarity” of people such as Hamilton, finding “men of delicate [T]aste” might appear to be an extremely difficult task.<sup>302</sup> Yet Hume argues that: “they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind.”<sup>303</sup> Hume’s relative sense of ease in finding a true judge of Taste was because he believed that such a critic

in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.<sup>304</sup>

These characteristics are exemplified by Hume’s famous retelling of a portion of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, in which he adapts the story of the extraordinary wine tasting contest between two of Sancho’s kinsmen.<sup>305</sup> In the story, the two kinsmen each take a sip from a hogshead of wine. They then issue a judgment on the wine’s taste and agree that it is of good quality, but both maintain that there is some unknown flaw hampering the drink’s ability to be truly excellent. One suspects that minute flavors of leather impede the taste, while the other disagrees and declares that the wine possesses more of a metallic flavor. The kinsmen’s nearby companions “hoot in derision,” and are entirely satisfied with the wine’s quality, as they presumably lack a

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<sup>301</sup> Dougary, “This is Art,” 49.

<sup>302</sup> Hume acknowledges that “men of delicate [T]aste [are] rare” (Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 28). Hamilton is “rare” in the sense that the typical person will likely not have had similar opportunities nor had the privilege of frequenting such distinguished and renowned members of society.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 28. He states this in order to answer his own question on “where are such critics to be found? By what marks are they to be known? How distinguish them from pretenders?” (ibid., 25).

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>305</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 52. For Hume’s version of the story, see: Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 15-7.

delicacy of taste.<sup>306</sup> Upon finishing the hoghead of wine, everyone was able to see the bottom of the barrel, allowing them to discover “an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.”<sup>307</sup> Ultimately, Sancho’s kinsmen could hold their heads high as they were justified in their earlier judgments, and could be regarded as true judges of taste.

Fortunately, demonstrating Hamilton’s abilities to be a good Humean critic does not rest on a similar wine test. Although Hume’s story appears out of place, given that he is supposed to be focusing on the arts, he explains that the purpose of this tale is to emphasize “the great resemblance between mental [Taste] and [gustatory] taste.”<sup>308</sup> Here, the required *delicacy* in both aesthetic and gustatory tastes is found in one’s ability to distinguish minuscule features and to make finer discernments when appraising the object in question.<sup>309</sup> Hume rightfully claimed this to be one of the most desirable traits of the critic, as it appeared to encapsulate his remaining requisite characteristics for a true judge of Taste. When a critic had no sense of delicacy, “he judge[d] without any distinction, and [was] only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass[ed] unnoticed and disregarded. Where he [was] not aided by practice, his verdict [was] attended with confusion and hesitation.”<sup>310</sup> Within this statement, Hume proposed that a bad critic makes poor judgments due to lack the of necessary experience in *practicing* and *comparing* objects, as well as the inability to remain *disinterested* and exercise *good sense*—all of which hinder one’s ability to properly appreciate and judge works of art.

Practice was a trait of central importance to Hume, as he believed that the act of exposing oneself to as much art as possible trained the eye to better perceive every minute detail in an

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<sup>306</sup> Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 52.

<sup>307</sup> Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 16.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>309</sup> MacLachlan, “Hume and the Standard of Taste,” 19.

<sup>310</sup> Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 24.

object, thereby improving one's ability to ascertain the work's beauty. He remarked that, without practice, "when objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment, which attends them, is obscure and confused; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects."<sup>311</sup> Hume proposed that the necessary remedy for the initial confusion one experiences when viewing art is to simply practice more and train the eye through repeated observation and close examination.<sup>312</sup> When sufficiently practiced, the faculties of Taste will be slowly perfected, thereby "dissipating the mist" which clouded the piece and would enable the critic to consistently make accurate and well-founded judgments without the fear of being mistaken.<sup>313</sup> Therefore, the critic's ability to distinguish the finer details in a work of art is an acquired trait, and the more practice of viewing art in general, the better the critic will be in detecting the seemingly insignificant features that actually contribute to the piece's overall beauty.<sup>314</sup>

One could argue that in having been actively involved in the arts for roughly sixty years, Hamilton was a well-practiced critic when it came to viewing art. Merely by spending time with great artists such as Lichtenstein and René Magritte, and in frequenting each of their studios and exhibition spaces, Hamilton effectively provided himself with the opportunity to constantly view and witness the creation of what many have agreed to be some of the greatest works of contemporary art. Moreover, the many exhibitions Hamilton curated bolster the notion that he

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>312</sup> Specifically, Hume advocated for "the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty" (ibid.).

<sup>313</sup> "The mist dissipates, which seemed formerly to hang over the object: The organ [of *taste*] acquires greater perfection in its operations; and can pronounce, without danger of mistake, concerning the merits of every performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired by the same means, in the judging of it" (ibid.).

<sup>314</sup> Hume claimed that with practice, "the smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is [the] organ [of *taste*], and the more elaborate [the object's] make and composition" (ibid., 18); therefore, one's ability to perceive the smaller objects increased the greater sense of beauty derived from the object, since the critic's mind could begin to understand the complexity of the work by better comprehending the smaller details which added up, and created the sense of beauty.

was experienced in viewing—and understanding—art.<sup>315</sup> For any given show, a curator must review the many works submitted for consideration and then select the pieces that best represent the exhibition’s concept or, in the case of a retrospective, highlight the distinctive elements that have come to be associated with a particular artist. The latter is exactly what Hamilton had to do when he curated *The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* at the Tate in 1966, which was Europe’s first retrospective on Duchamp, a pioneer who profoundly influenced the former’s artistic career.<sup>316</sup> As absurd as it may seem given his current popularity and seeming permanent position within the fictional artists’ international hall of fame, during the 1960s, Duchamp has removed himself from the public and his works had fallen out of vogue; Hamilton took it upon himself to organize a show that would stimulate a renewed sense of interest in Duchamp.<sup>317</sup> In composing and curating such an exhibition, Hamilton had to go through Duchamp’s body of work and select the pieces he felt best represented the French artist and the impact he had on the arts. Such a task required that Hamilton be experienced in viewing art (or, at the very least, Duchamp’s art), as he presumably had to go through many of Duchamp’s works so as to decide which ones most clearly and effectively communicated his style. The exhibition was a success, and as a result, many give Hamilton credit with having been one of the figures helped revitalize popular artistic interest in Duchamp and brought him to a much wider audience.<sup>318</sup> Given his vast

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<sup>315</sup> Among many later shows, Hamilton began his career as a curator in 1951 with *Growth and Form* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and then in 1955 with *Man, Machine and Motion* at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Then in 1957, he organized *An Exhibit* at the Hatton Gallery and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (David Mellor, “The Pleasures and Sorrows of Modernity: Vision, Space, and the Social Body in Richard Hamilton,” in *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Hal Foster et al. [Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2010], 17, originally published in *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Richard Morphet [London, U.K.: Tate Gallery, 1992]).

<sup>316</sup> Jonathan Jones, “Richard Hamilton, the Duchamp-ion of Intellectual Art,” *Guardian Online*, May 14, 2012, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2012/may/14/richard-hamilton-marcel-duchamp-national-gallery>.

<sup>317</sup> “It’s amazing, given the fame of Duchamp today, to think he was ever a neglected figure” (ibid.).

<sup>318</sup> “If Hamilton helped to invent pop art, he was also a conceptual artist powerfully influenced by Marcel Duchamp, whose work he interpreted and popularized” (ibid.).

experience in curating, Hamilton would have continuously been forced to practice viewing art so as to be able to detect the minute features which best communicated the exhibition's concept.

Additionally, the education that Hamilton received due to his early interest in drawings further justifies the notion that he was a practiced critic. At the age of ten he enrolled into a local drawing class, at which stage his instructors even remarked how gifted he was, considering how young he was.<sup>319</sup> He was also known to frequent the Victoria & Albert Museum, where he spent a great deal of time studying Greco-Roman tapestries and prints by Rembrandt, which caused him to develop an interest in etchings.<sup>320</sup> In 1938, Hamilton was accepted at the Royal Academy School in London, but two years later, the requirements of the Second World War forced him to work as a draughtsman at an engineering company.<sup>321</sup> He later returned to the Academy to finish his education, but much to his misfortune, the head of the school terminated Hamilton's scholarship due to artistic disagreements.<sup>322</sup> He then resolutely pursued a career in the arts and

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<sup>319</sup> "I decided I was interested in drawing when I was 10. I saw a notice in the library advertising art classes. The teacher told me that he couldn't take me – these were adult classes, I was too young – but when he saw my drawing he told me that I might as well come back next week. I used to follow him round like a dog. He was terribly kind to me, and by the time I was 14 I was doing big charcoal drawings of the local down and outs" (Rachel Cooke, "Richard Hamilton: A Masterclass from the Father of Pop Art," *Observer*, February 13, 2010, sec. Review, p. 4, accessed February 23, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/feb/14/richard-hamilton-interview-serpentine-cooke>, quoting Richard Hamilton; and Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 8, originally published as "Kunsthalle Bielefeld," *Studies* (April, 1978).

<sup>320</sup> "I also visited the Victoria & Albert Museum and would look at Graeco-Roman tapestries," and the museum is also where he "first learned about etching [...], and spent days looking at Rembrandts in the Print Room" (Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Pop Daddy: The Great Richard Hamilton on his Early Exhibitions," *Tate Magazine* vol. 4 [March-April, 2003]: 81, accessed March 5, 2014, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/pop-daddy-richard-hamilton-early-exhibition>). Additionally, Hamilton remarked how he was fortunate that some of the schools he attended were so close to art museums, where he had "the advantage of seeing new work by professional artists" on a regular basis (Michael Craig-Martin, "Richard Hamilton in Conversation with Michael Craig Martin," in *Richard Hamilton*, ed. by Hal Foster et al. [Cambridge, M.A.: MIT University Press, 2010], 4, originally published in *Talking Art 13* [London, U.K.: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1993]).

<sup>321</sup> Cooke, "Richard Hamilton"; and Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 8.

<sup>322</sup> Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 8-10. "By the time he returned to the school he was in his 20s; the Royal Academy had changed completely. 'It was run by a complete mad man, Sir Alfred Munnings, who used to walk about the place with a whip and jodphurs. It was scary. One of my teachers said my work was looking quite like Cézanne. Oh, good, I thought. Then he said: 'Augustus John knocks spots off Cézanne.' Well, of course, I roared with laughter. He went red in the face. One day he asked me if I'd visited the Picasso exhibition. 'Yes,' I said. 'It was wonderful.' But he got more and more furious. 'They're not even good honest Frenchmen,' he said. 'They're a load of fucking dagos.' What could you do? It was an absolute joke!' A few weeks later Hamilton received a note

finished his studies at London's prestigious Slade School of Art in 1951.<sup>323</sup> After which, Hamilton became "actively involved in artistic practice, art theory, art exhibitions, and art education" and began teaching at King's College in Newcastle upon Tyne, and later worked as a part time instructor at the University of Durham.<sup>324</sup> While many may be aware of the fact that Hamilton was an admired teacher, the extent to which he immersed himself in the discipline of education is often glossed over. In the 1950s, he was "at the center of the movement to reform art education in England," as his own academic experiences had insufficiently prepared him to adapt to the modern world of art.<sup>325</sup> During his time at both the Academy and Slade, Hamilton was taught according to the principles established by the classical Art Academies, where "the student was sat before an object—most often a nude woman—and by prolonged practice, together with the acquisition of knowledge about the physical configurations involved, a personal recording of the subject was achieved."<sup>326</sup> Such classical methods of study emphasized the importance of viewing and studying canonical works in order to better familiarize oneself with what had been done in the past.<sup>327</sup> Most significantly, however, the purpose of the classical method was to provide the student with the opportunity to examine the features and the essence of what constituted beautiful art, in order to allow them to incorporate similar principles into their own

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informing him that the president did not believe he was profiting from his instruction. His studentship was [then] terminated [...]" (ibid.).

<sup>323</sup> Mellor, "The Pleasures and Sorrows of Modernity," 15; Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 8; and Richard Hamilton, "Transcript of the John Tusa Interview with Richard Hamilton," May 5, 2002, radio interview, transcript and Adobe Flash audio, *British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio 3: The John Tusa Interviews*, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nc95x>.

<sup>324</sup> Edward A. Shanken, "From Cybernetics to Telematics: The Art, Pedagogy, and Theory of Roy Ascott," in *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Roy Ascott (Berkeley, C.A.: University of California Press), 7; and Craig-Martin, "Richard Hamilton in Conversation with Michael Craig Martin," 4.

<sup>325</sup> Shanken, "From Cybernetics to Telematics," 7.

<sup>326</sup> Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 177 (originally published as "First Year Studies at Newcastle," *Times Education Supplement*, ca. 1960), and 12, 173-175 (originally published as "About Art Teaching, Basically," *Motif 8* [Winter, 1961]: 17-23); and, "at the Royal Academy Schools I went through all the normal experiences of a student that time, painting and drawing plaster casts and nude models day after day" (Craig-Martin, "Richard Hamilton in Conversation with Michael Craig Martin," 1, quoting Richard Hamilton).

<sup>327</sup> Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 12, and 173-5.

work. Even though Hamilton opposed such forms of teaching, he nonetheless strongly encouraged that his students gain experience in observing art.<sup>328</sup> His approach to teaching was “analytical, looking at various internal processes and procedures in an open-ended and experimental manner,” in taking such an “analytical” point of view, it could be safely assumed that one would need to be experienced and practiced so as to be able to tease out the “internal processes and procedures” of a given work.<sup>329</sup> Simply based off his educational experiences, whether as a student in the setting of a classical academy or as a teacher proposing new methods of instruction, the remaining record shows that Hamilton’s widespread familiarity and practice with art was quite extensive.

An inherent component that develops from being a practiced art critic is one’s experience in comparing works of art, and this aspect is another of Hume’s requirements that a critic must possess. “It is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form *comparisons* between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other.”<sup>330</sup> Hume reasonably argues that a critic who has not had the opportunity to view and compare various beautiful works is “totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him.”<sup>331</sup> In having multiple pieces stored within one’s memory, Hume appears to argue that the critic can make use of such previous experiences, in comparing and practicing, to be able to juxtapose works of art with one another in order to better ascertain the individual elements that might make one work of art more beautiful than the other.

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<sup>328</sup> Richard Yeomans, “Basic Design and the Pedagogy of Richard Hamilton,” in *Histories of Art and Design Education: Collected Essays*, ed. Mervyn Romans (Bristol, U.K.: Intellect, 2005), 198, originally published in *Journal of Art & Design Education* vol. 7, no. 2 (June, 1988): 155-73, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8070.1988.tb00434.x>.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 198

<sup>330</sup> Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 21.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

The ability to compare art inherently requires that the critic have not only practice in viewing art, but also a firm understanding of how art has evolved over time to become what is presently is. In having such knowledge, the critic can draw from memory to compare works against one another, thereby being able to render a truer verdict as to which piece is more beautiful. Hamilton placed great value in one's proper education in the history of aesthetics and the arts, and believed it to be necessary information for any young artist to possess.<sup>332</sup> His classical training in the British Academies would have encouraged him to master such knowledge, and would have undoubtedly included material he was required to learn throughout his education. Despite the frustrations he might have had with such classic teaching methods, Hamilton understood the importance of being able to refer to other works to further his own practice by ensuring that he was not repeating what had already been done.<sup>333</sup> Additionally, the numerous exhibitions he curated would have required him to compare the many works submitted for a given show as a means of selecting the best works to display. Furthermore, such a task would have provided Hamilton with the opportunity to not only add more works to his mental repertoire, but it would also have challenged his art historical knowledge by requiring him to compare the works he would have been exposed to, to the more canonical works he had become familiar with through his artistic training.

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<sup>332</sup> Hamilton does not hold the most recent contemporary art works in high regard, as he "believes that this generation [of artists] is 'ignorant... they have no understanding of art history. [Their work] is a waste of time. So much of what they're doing has already been done, and not only by Duchamp, even. You think: you're 50 years too late, mate'," effectively reinforcing the value he placed on one's art-historical knowledge (Cooke, "Richard Hamilton"; and Hamilton, "Transcript of the John Tusa Interview with Richard Hamilton").

<sup>333</sup> Yeomans, "Basic Design and the Pedagogy of Richard Hamilton," 200. Additionally, Hamilton's beliefs allude to the notion that it was the only way an artist could oppose imitation and truly be creative, and serves to bolster the similarities between both Hamilton and Adrià. Such a quest for originality can be seen as mirroring Adrià's own goals of being truly creative by striving to create new culinary traditions and dishes, thereby ensuring he never came near imitating or reproducing that which had already been done. For more, see: [Chapter II](#), p. 39; McInerney, "It was Delicious while it Lasted," 172; and Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 6:38.

Hume also strongly believed that a critic's judgment should be entirely devoid of any bias whatsoever. Such a point was clearly important to Hume as it permitted the critic to properly judge the work, as he states that a one who is "accustomed to see[ing], and examin[ing], and weigh[ing] the several performances, admired in different ages and nations, can alone rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius."<sup>334</sup> Significantly, in asking that a critic be able to "admire" works from "different ages and nations," Hume is requiring that "he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination."<sup>335</sup> Despite a critic's true feelings about the work of art in question, one's Taste cannot be hindered by personal sentiments because the piece's true beauty, according to Hume, is undeniable, for "when [...] obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy; and while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men."<sup>336</sup> In a sense, Hume is claiming that beautiful works of art are designated as such because they have never fallen out of vogue and have retained their popularity, as they "have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages"<sup>337</sup> and have even endured the test of time, since "all the changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure [the work's] glory."<sup>338</sup> Therefore, if a critic were to become more partial to one work over another because of cultural and personal preferences, Hume would argue that such subjective matters negate the validity of

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<sup>334</sup> Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 21.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

the resulting judgment.<sup>339</sup> Ultimately, Hume maintains this position because he believes that a critic needs to understand and appreciate the work within its original and historical context, to best comprehend how it is a product of its time and how it has come to be regarded as beautiful.<sup>340</sup>

The one perk Hamilton did claim through his friendship with Adrià was the ability to secure his usual table at El Bulli every summer, which was granted to him even before their friendship was fully developed, simply based off his loyalty.<sup>341</sup> Yet apart from that, there appears to be no reason to believe that Hamilton might have made any biased or prejudicial judgments concerning the experience Adrià offered. Hamilton was not one of the restaurant's financial investors, nor did he stand to gain anything from promoting the chef within the art world; simply put, he was impressed with what Adrià had been creating and was attracted to his artistic sensibilities, and as such, was able keep his judgments impartial. Hamilton was a staunch

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<sup>339</sup> As Hume argues, one's partiality towards a specific work can be understood as a preference for what one knows best, as it is natural for one to feel more comfortable with "objects which are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs" (ibid., 32).

<sup>340</sup> Hume additionally advocates that in order to properly pass judgment on a work, the critic must have the proper circumstances to ensure that, not only is the object being judged without any prejudice, but also that the critic be provided the optimal conditions so as to have the best opportunity to fully benefit from the experience ("we may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance"; ibid., 22). As such, Hume notes that "we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition" (ibid., 11), since "particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception" (ibid., 14). He elaborates that critic must have "a perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object" (ibid., 11), and under such circumstances, one could properly evaluate the object and make the best informed judgment on Taste (Carroll, "Hume's Standard of Taste," 184).

Furthermore, while it might seem difficult to guarantee that one is not making any judgments plagued by personal biases, Hume argues that a good critic should possess "strong sense" (or alternatively "good sense"), by which he means a critic's ability to ensure that they remain free from prejudice, all the while "apprehend[ing] aesthetic unities and structures, identif[y]ing genres, gaug[ing] the adaptation of form to generic purposes, and estimate[ing] the degree of verisimilitude in representations" (Korsmeyer, "Hume's Standard of Taste," 185). Essentially, Hume argues that it is a quality that keeps oneself acutely in check and aware of any biases that could be brought to the viewing experience, and although this characteristic is "not an essential part of taste, [it] is at least requisite to the operations of [the faculty of Taste]" (Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 23). Hume uses a gastronomic example to illustrate his point, and says that "a man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavors" (ibid., 13), likewise, a critic who maintains any prejudices should exercise caution in rendering a verdict on matters of *taste* and should be sure to employ his "strong sense" so as to not make an incorrect judgment on matters of Taste.

<sup>341</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 0:50.

advocate for objectivity in teaching, and “took an uncompromising and extreme position in his total rejection of self-expression.”<sup>342</sup> Personal sentiments did not belong in the classroom, and so strong were his beliefs for this that he declined to teach a Color Theory class, because to him, color was “so much the prey of subjective [T]aste and preference, [it] represented a wayward and elusive target for [his] attention.”<sup>343</sup> Even when teaching, Hamilton firmly held the belief that “the teacher must eradicate preconception” from the student’s mind as a means of ensuring that they could have the proper attitude needed to evaluate and understand the importance of the work being judged, without letting any outside factors cloud their thoughts.<sup>344</sup> Again, Hamilton himself never claimed to be a “gastronome” or a “foodie,” and maintained that his opinions about Adrià’s work were due to his interest in how the chef “achieved these strange ideas.”<sup>345</sup> Given Hamilton’s ability to adhere to Hume’s principle of remaining free from any prejudice, it can be surmised that he would have brought such a mentality with him when dining at El Bulli, and would have taken any unnecessary considerations into account when pronouncing his judgments of *taste*.

Since Hamilton has been shown to possess delicate *taste*, and that he was sufficiently experienced in comparing and practiced in viewing works of art, as well as being able to distance himself from subjective feelings when making judgments, the Pop artist effectively exemplified Hume’s requisite characteristics of being a good critic, and as such, was a critic whose *taste* the rest of us should attempt to emulate. Hume believed that “delicacy of [T]aste is [...] to be desired

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<sup>342</sup> Yeomans, “Basic Design and the Pedagogy of Richard Hamilton,” 197; and Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 169-70, originally published as “Diagrammar,” *The Developing Process* (Newcastle, U.K., 1959), 19-26.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 198; and Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 179-80 (originally published as “What Kind of Art Education?” *Studio International* [September, 1966], interview between Richard Hamilton and Victor Willing). In regard to “students’ preconceptions about art” in the 1960s, Hamilton stated that “we have to do some erasure” (Maharaj, “A Liquid Elemental Scattering,” 121), so that each student would hold the belief and be of “a stance where each element should count in its own right—a refusal to prejudge the in terms of handed-down notions of value and [T]aste or at least keep such judgments at bay for as long as possible” (*ibid.*, 115).

<sup>345</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 5:49, quoting Richard Hamilton.

and cultivated,”<sup>346</sup> and states it very matter-of-factly by claiming that its desirability is due to the notion that “it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed.”<sup>347</sup> Fortunately, such a delicacy of Taste is obtainable to all who are willing to adapt and learn it.<sup>348</sup> Yet, such reasoning proves to be insufficient when trying to convince the contemporary viewer to abide by someone else’s judgments on *taste*. Furthermore, it would be incredibly difficult to justify why one ought to listen to a Humean critic to the stubborn members of today’s society, as the internet and technology now afford them the ability to be a self-proclaimed critic.

When closely scrutinizing the methods by which restaurants (and nearly any other professional field where customer service is a daily part of business) are judged and critiqued, the role of the good critic seems even more necessary. Whether it is through *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, blogs, or any other social networking site, anyone with an internet connection can be a critic. As the countless reviews on sites such as *Yelp!* and *Opentable* demonstrate, the multiplicity of tastes is staggering and ultimately belittles the authority of the real critics.<sup>349</sup> Take for instance Zagat, “which invites all of its readers to rate food, service, and atmosphere on numerical scales, and then publishes their scores, undermines the very premises of the taste hierarchy by treating all of its reviewers as ‘authorized knowers’.”<sup>350</sup> Furthermore, it is impossible to know whether a given review will prove to be an accurate indicator of how another

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<sup>346</sup> David Hume, “Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion,” in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, I.N.: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1987), part I, essay I, paragraph 3, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Hume/hmMPL1.html>.

<sup>347</sup> Hume, “Of the Standard of Taste,” 18.

<sup>348</sup> Unfortunately, however, “in theory, the world of good *taste* is open to all, but in practice, how available it is to you is a function of your economic and social resources” (my italics; Iggers, “Who Needs a Critic?” 95).

<sup>349</sup> “It is clear both that tasting capacities vary significantly from person to person and that prior experiences and beliefs influence taste perception” (Michael Shaffer, “Taste, Gastronomic Expertise, and Objectivity,” in *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry*, ed. Fritz Allhoff et al. [Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007], 79).

<sup>350</sup> Iggers, “Who Needs a Critic?” 96.

person might enjoy it. Given such considerations, one cannot understate the importance of identifying the good critics, as they are desperately needed to set a standard of *taste* for all to adhere by, since finding true judgments can prove to be a fruitless task given the diversity of opinions.

The problem plaguing systems of review is not limited to the amateur critic; as such, issues are equally present within the world of professional criticism. When journalists, as well as restaurant and art critics, render a judgment, it is ultimately a mere prediction for what they think “the public is likely to enjoy.”<sup>351</sup> Yet the diversity of *tastes* proves difficult to overcome, for even a critic’s prophecy will frequently fail many readers, as academic and part-time critic Jeremy Iggers notes that some diners “have had wonderful experience in [...] restaurants [I have reviewed], and my negative reviews belie the reality of their experience.”<sup>352</sup> The reason for this is that “gastronomic expertise is not a sort of rational expertise because it involves nothing more than the perceived ability to apply concepts to direct tastes reflectively, and thus is essentially subjective in nature,” and facilitates one’s understanding as to why it is difficult to trust a critic given the lack of objectivity their opinion might be grounded in.<sup>353</sup> It also seems foolish when thinking of how people structure their decisions according to whatever “truth” these “authorized knower[s]” claim to state, given that professional critics rarely begin their careers with the requisite qualifications needed to properly perform what is expected of them, “yet [their] authority as a critic [is] established as soon as [their] byline appear[s] in the newspaper.”<sup>354</sup> Iggers argues that this is due to the fact that the publications in which such reviews appear are “recognized [...] as a source of truth,” and as such, the critic’s authority is merely granted to

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>353</sup> Shaffer, “Taste, Gastronomic Expertise, and Objectivity,” 85.

<sup>354</sup> Iggers, “Who Needs a Critic?” 90.

them in accordance with their job at the publication.<sup>355</sup> Taking into account the numerous concerns regarding reviews and criticisms at both the professional and amateur levels, Hume’s goal of establishing and seeking out a good critic seem all the more important so as to ground such opinions within a universal standard.

The countless reviews of El Bulli prove that judgments of *taste* concerning the restaurant’s experience varied greatly, for even though the service and most of the dishes were exceptional, there were still certain components of the meal that managed to displease certain customers.<sup>356</sup> Take for instance Adrià’s *Frozen Parmesan Air with Muesli* ([fig. 10](#)), which one diner claimed tasted “awfully good” and instantly understood the conceptual element behind the dish, which was “about the maximum lightness achievable in food; about taking an ingredient known for its density and coming close to sublimating it; about eliminating mouth feel from the gustatory equation.”<sup>357</sup> Yet for others, the same dish missed the mark and was more of “a ‘bread bowl’ taken out of the freezer; inside it is a mixture between beaten egg and ice, although in fact it is made of parmesan cheese powder with an overbearingly strong taste... like being hit by a ball.”<sup>358</sup> Given the variety of conflicting reviews over Adrià’s creations, it still seems difficult to swallow Hamilton’s proclamations regarding the artistic nature of the Pavilion G experience, and still prompts the question: with all the critics out there, why should someone listen to and mirror Hamilton’s judgments of *taste*?

To satisfactorily answer such a question, one need simply refer to Hamilton’s 1966 exhibition on Duchamp, which will show that many have already—consciously or not—

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Take for instance one diner who noted that due to “his constant search for new things, new textures, new combinations, sometimes [Adrià] misses the mark, which is the risk. I’ve never had a meal cooked by him that didn’t have something that didn’t miss the mark. But I’ve never had a meal cooked by him where there weren’t several things that were sensational” (Hesser, “In Spain, a Chef to Rival Dalí,” quoting Victor de la Serna).

<sup>357</sup> Gopnik, “Palate vs. Palette.”

<sup>358</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 193, quoting Steeven van Teeseling.

emulated their Taste after the Pop artist's.<sup>359</sup> Despite Duchamp's now well-recognized success, popular Taste during the 1960s appeared to be of the consensus that his work did not deserve to be on the art scene's "hot list." Though Americans began to devote a renewed attention to Duchamp in 1963 due to Walter Hopps' own retrospective on the French artist (which Hamilton had seen),<sup>360</sup> many credit Hamilton with having revived European Taste in Duchamp's work.<sup>361</sup> It is additionally worth mentioning that Hamilton's show likely stimulated a greater sense of interest since he recreated (after receiving permission from the artist) what is now regarded as one of Duchamp's most famous works, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* ([fig. 11](#)), thereby adding to the overall prestige and notoriety of his own retrospective.<sup>362</sup> Duchamp's revival owes much to Hamilton's (and Hopps') delicate sense of *taste*, which many art aficionados decided to emulate, thereby firmly securing the French artist's reputation in the history of art as one of the period's—and some might argue the world's—pioneering artists.

Though the degree to which Hamilton actually impacted Duchamp's career is debatable, the Pop artist's early admiration and devotion to the Dadaist provided him with the opportunity to be one of the early proponents of the latter's works, and indicate that he was not simply hitching a ride on the modern art bandwagon.<sup>363</sup> The seeds that facilitated Hamilton's task of revitalizing popular European interest in Duchamp were initially sown with Hopps' retrospective from three years earlier, which simultaneously occurred around the time when artists began

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<sup>359</sup> Jones, "Richard Hamilton, the Duchamp-ion of Intellectual Art."

<sup>360</sup> Craig-Martin, "Richard Hamilton in Conversation with Michael Craig Martin," 8.

<sup>361</sup> Caroline Cros, *Marcel Duchamp* (London, U.K.: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006), 120.

<sup>362</sup> *The Large Glass* was originally destroyed in 1926 (Cooke, "Richard Hamilton"; Obrist, "Pop Daddy," 82; and Jones, "Richard Hamilton, the Duchamp-ion of Intellectual Art"). Furthermore, Hamilton's exhibition was "remarkable not only in presenting the work of this major artist for the first time in Europe, it [was also] unique in showing him nearly complete" (Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 217, originally published in the Arts Council of Great Britain's retrospective exhibition catalog for *Marcel Duchamp* at the Tate Gallery, London, [June, 1966]).

<sup>363</sup> Cooke, "Richard Hamilton."

rejecting Abstract Expressionism, and as such, needed to create a new movement with which they could better identify.<sup>364</sup> As a result, artists turned to Duchamp and Dadaism, which had “opened wide the doors [that] led to an ‘anything goes’ freedom of materials and subject matter” for the following generation of artists.<sup>365</sup> The ideals and changing Taste, which stemmed from those two events, were pervasive among art aficionados right before *The Almost Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, effectively creating a perfect time for Hamilton to curate his show. After the exhibit, Duchamp was brought to the foreground of the European art scene, and served as an inspiration for artists to break from established tradition and forge their own paths.<sup>366</sup>

It is additionally worth mentioning that Hamilton became an inspiration for, among others, Warhol and Damien Hirst. The latter pair consciously decided to emulate the Pop artist’s sense of Taste; and had Hamilton been inexperienced in viewing art, it would seem likely that his students would not have taken his advice, as he would have had very little to ground it in.<sup>367</sup> His proven influence on some of world’s most respected artists demonstrates that Hamilton’s exceptional experience with the arts helped stimulate and shape the practices of contemporary art. Though the argument for giving Hamilton credit with resurrecting Duchamp can be considered somewhat tenuous, it nonetheless serves to demonstrate that the Pop artist has already been recognized to be a good and insightful critic, and the mere fact that he played a part in bringing back the French artist attests to his superior sense of Taste and lends further credibility to his judgments.

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<sup>364</sup> “After the first burst of anti-Abstract Expressionism diatribes early in 1962 [...], it became evident that this withdrawal from the principles of Abstract Expressionism was largely based on admiration and respect for that movement: it had been done too well to continue. Nonetheless, abstraction was the mode of the times and it was up to artists to discover new angles from which to approach it” (Lucy Lippard, ed., “New York Pop,” in *Pop Art* [New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publisher, 1973], 74).

<sup>365</sup> Lucy Lippard, ed., “Introduction,” in *Pop Art* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publisher, 1973), 22.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>367</sup> Hamilton, “Transcript of the John Tusa Interview with Richard Hamilton.”

Hamilton has proven to be an uncannily accurate judge of artistic talent in the past, and succeeded in demonstrating that he was a good Humean critic who all should attempt to follow as a means of bettering their own senses of *taste*. And perhaps, one could boldly deduce that in accordance with Hamilton's high regards for both Adrià and Duchamp, as well as the numerous comparisons he had made between the two, the chef might eventually be regarded on equal artistic par with Duchamp. Given that there are many critics "to whom Nature has denied either an organic delicacy or a power of concentration, without which the most delicious dishes can pass them by unnoticed," there is a need for people such as Hamilton who have proven to be an accurate arbiter of *taste*, as such critics can help establish a universal standard of *taste* for all to adhere by.<sup>368</sup> Significantly, in view of Documenta's perceived role as the dictator of Taste,<sup>369</sup> the good critic who inspires people to mirror their own decisions on his is important as it effectively sets the Standard, since "within a given regime of truth it is possible to establish standards of *taste*, because they are common to people with a shared way of life."<sup>370</sup> Essentially, within the contemporary art world, or the "given regime of truth," Hamilton's widely acknowledged influence in the arts provided him with the capability of establishing a standard of *taste*, as his judgments proved to be accepted by "people with a shared way of life." Ultimately, such notions imply that Hamilton was a well-respected critic, and one to whom amateur critics could safely turn to so as to better their own senses of *taste*, thereby bolstering the voices of those who claim Adrià's art to be of good *taste*. By having Hamilton fulfill the role of a good and exemplary Humean critic, it attests to the art world's need to open the gates that have been barring the artistic recognition of the culinary arts, through which it could otherwise expose itself to other,

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<sup>368</sup> Brillat-Savarin, *La physiologie du goût*, 167.

<sup>369</sup> "With a budget approaching €20m, the exhibition lays claim to setting the international artistic agenda: Documenta identifies which artists, living and dead, we should be looking at, what ideas and issues we should be attending to, what problems and opportunities art faces at a given time" (Searle, "100 Days of Ineptitude").

<sup>370</sup> Iggers, "Who Needs a Critic?" 100 (my italics).

richer worlds. With Hamilton serving as this benchmark who succeeded in furthering the dialogue on the culinary arts, people should feel encouraged to embrace his judgments and attempt to emulate them, as it would enable them to open their minds and empower them to see the world—or at least the one of art—in a new light. Having people meet this Hamilton-ian standard will only set the mark higher, thereby requiring future generations to aspire and attain better taste, which in the end, will only further our understanding of the arts.

## CONCLUSION

We can remark that any man who has enjoyed a sumptuous meal, in a room decorated with mirrors and paintings, sculptures and flowers, a room drenched with perfumes, enriched with lovely women, filled with the strains of soft music... that man, we say, will not need to make too great an effort to convince himself that every science has taken part in the scheme to heighten and enhance properly for him the pleasures of taste.<sup>371</sup>  
—Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Those who have had the fortunate opportunity to dine at El Bulli would find it difficult to contest Brillat-Savarin's statement, as Adrià had indeed ensured that "every science" took part in enhancing his guests' experiences. Similarly, most Pavilion G diners would seem to agree with Brillat-Savarin when he claimed, "the truth is that by the end of a well-savored meal both soul and body enjoy an especial well-being."<sup>372</sup> For the eighteenth century philosopher, the requirements for fully enjoying the pleasures of the table were simple:<sup>373</sup> one merely needed to have "food at least passable, good wine, agreeable companions, and enough time."<sup>374</sup> Yet, after having undertaken a close analysis of the entire experience Adrià provided his guests during the Documenta dinner—which is what he considered to be his oeuvre—it is evident that the chef had

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<sup>371</sup> Brillat-Savarin, *La physiologie du goût*, 42.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>373</sup> The pleasures of the table "are a reflective sensation which is born from the various circumstances of place, time, things, and people who make up the surroundings of the meal," and are distinctly different from the pleasures of eating, which "is the actual and direct sensation of satisfying a need" (*ibid.*, 192).

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.* He was also much more specific, when he later stipulated that a perfect meal requires: "Let the number of guests be no more than twelve, so that the conversation may always remain general; Let them be chosen that their professions will be varied, their tastes analogous, and that there be such points of contact that the odious formality of introductions will not be needed; Let the dining-room be amply lighted, the linen of dazzling cleanliness, and the temperature maintained at from sixty to sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit; [...] Let the dishes be of exquisite quality, but limited in their number, and the wines of first rank also, each according to its degree; Let the progression of the former be from the most substantial to the lightest, and of the latter from the simplest wines to the headiest; Let the tempo of eating be moderate [...]; Let the guests be disciplined by the restraints of polite society and animated by the hope that the evening will not pass without its rewarding pleasures [...]. If anyone has attended a party combining all of these virtues, he can boast that he has known perfection, and for each one of them which has been forgotten or ignored he will have experienced the less delight" (*ibid.*, 193-4).

taken the pleasures of the table to a realm beyond what Brillat-Savarin could have ever imagined.<sup>375</sup>

Both the culinary creativity and the extraordinary level of service at the Pavilion G experience provided Adrià's guests with an opportunity to push beyond the comfortable parameters of how one perceives and consumes food. Despite tinkering and altering the appearance of ingredients, the chef understood that "a good palate is not tried by strong flavors; but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest."<sup>376</sup> In his dishes, Adrià highlighted the purity of individual flavors so that, when savored by the diner, the mental confusion that resulted from the visual appearance of a dish not corresponding to its expected taste forced his guests to reconsider how they interpreted the culinary arts. For instance, *Virgin Olive Oil Caramel Spring* ([fig. 12](#)) did not provide any visual cues as to how it would taste or what its ingredients were, the diner's gustatory taste played an essential role in trying to comprehend the dish. The metallic looking, spring-like form, and apparently edible "ring" was presented to the diner in a small jewelry box sitting atop a bed of salt—the ring was actually the olive oil caramel (the diner was instructed to put the coil on their finger, eat it in one go and then feel it vanish in their mouth). The puzzling appearance of the dish gave the diner no indication that the coil was an ode to olives, a Spanish culinary staple. Yet to simply revel in the dish's taste caused one to neglect the others aspects of the meal; and though he never expressly stated it, it would seem that Adrià held Hume's belief that "to be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with

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<sup>375</sup> "I want people to enjoy not just the food and its smells and textures, but the whole experience" (Pittman, "Yum, Yum," quoting Ferran Adrià).

<sup>376</sup> Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 18.

any vigor of temper or genius.”<sup>377</sup> For Adrià, every component of the meal was meant to enhance the diner’s experience in order to provide them with an ability to approach gastronomy with more of an intellectual mindset.

Adrià’s influence is not confined to the realm of the culinary arts, and has effectively crept its way into countless other disciplines. Ever since the chef’s recognition as one of Time Magazine’s 100 “Most Influential People of the Year,”<sup>378</sup> Adrià has left his mark not only on the studies of gastronomy, but also in the fields of science and education,<sup>379</sup> as well as those of fashion and design.<sup>380</sup> Additionally, the numerous documentaries and upcoming Hollywood production based on Adrià’s career attest to the chef’s rise as a culinary icon in contemporary popular culture.<sup>381</sup> Arguably, one of the most significant products that resulted from the chef’s influence in other fields was the 2007 musical piece performed by the Orchestre de Paris and

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<sup>377</sup> David Hume, “Of Refinement in the Arts,” in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, I.N.: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1987), part II, essay II, paragraph 1, accessed January 6, 2014, <http://www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Hume/hmMPL25.html#Part%20II,%20Essay%20II,%20OF%20REFINMENT%20IN%20THE%20ARTS>.

<sup>378</sup> James Graff, “Ferran Adrià: Gastronomic Innovator,” *Time Magazine 100 Most Influential People of the Year*, April 26, 2004, p. 72, accessed February 26, 2014, [http://press.elbulli.com/fitxa.php?lang=en&id=2126&KeepThis=true&TB\\_iframe=true&height=540&width=900#](http://press.elbulli.com/fitxa.php?lang=en&id=2126&KeepThis=true&TB_iframe=true&height=540&width=900#).

<sup>379</sup> Adrià is the focus of an exhibition at the Boston Science Museum, see: Denise Drower Swidey, “Ferran Adrià’s Innovation on Display at the Museum of Science” (*Boston Globe Online*, February 11, 2014, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/food-dining/2014/02/11/ferran-adria-innovation-display-museum-science/L0bIihxsurMq13sz1sUBXL/story.html>). Additionally, Adrià participates in Harvard University’s yearly Science & Cooking Lecture series, which serves to bring “chefs from around the world to lecture on the intersection of science and cooking” (Rachel Leah Blumenthal, “Ferran Adrià at Harvard: The Evolution of Culinary Theory,” *Eater National*, December 3, 2013, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2013/12/03/ferran-adria-at-harvard-the-evolution-of-culinary-theory.php>).

<sup>380</sup> Fashion mogul Lela Rose designed an entire clothes line after her experience at El Bulli, though seemingly more influenced by the shapes and forms of the food and drink serving vessels than by the food’s taste. “Drawn into the world of chef and artist Ferran Adrià, Lela Rose Fall 2014 centers around the geometry, natural beauty and the magical adventure that a meal can be” (*Lela Rose*, “Culinary Inspiration for Fall 2014,” February 12, 2014, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://lelarose.com/press-news/news/>). In 2006, Adrià was the recipient of the Raymond Loewy Foundation’s “Lucky Strike Design Prize” (Andrews, *Ferran*, 223), and in 2005, was included in an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, which was not about his food or artistic capabilities, but about the his work on the unique serving vessels he designed for individual dishes (Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 26:20).

<sup>381</sup> The upcoming movie is said to be based off of Abend’s *The Sorcerer’s Apprentices*, a book in which the author recounts the lives of El Bulli’s *stagiaires*, who slave away to learn how to become the next generation of culinary artists (Hillary Dixler, “Javier Bardem is ‘Obvious First Choice’ to Play Ferran Adrià,” *Eater National*, March 14, 2013, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2013/03/14/javier-bordem-is-obvious-first-choice-to-play-ferran-adria.php>).

composed by Bruno Mantovani, entitled *Le livre des illusions (hommage à Ferran Adrià)*.<sup>382</sup> Mantovani was so moved by his experience at El Bulli, and saw so many parallels with the world of music, that he wrote the twenty-nine minute piece to illustrate the connections he perceived between his gustatory and auditory faculties.<sup>383</sup> Such considerations reinforce Adrià's notion that "knowledge and/or collaboration with experts from different fields (gastronomic culture, history, industrial design, etc.) is essential for progress in cooking."<sup>384</sup> So firm is his belief in the necessity for a dialogue between gastronomy and other disciplines, that in 2011, Adrià made the decision to close El Bulli at the height of its popularity, and reopen it as the elBullifoundation in 2014,<sup>385</sup> where he plans "to foster creativity—that ineffable quality that is his great legacy."<sup>386</sup>

The chef explains that:

It will be kind of a think tank, [...] not a school exactly, but a foundation. A private nonprofit foundation. [...] We'll have 25 people here, chefs, two or three journalists, tech people. At the end of the day our work will be posted on the Internet. We will collaborate with the world of art and design. It will not be a restaurant. No Michelin, no customers, no pressure. Every year will be different.<sup>387</sup>

True to his dedicated mission of sharing and disseminating knowledge with the world so as to further humanity's understanding of food, his Foundation's first project is aptly named "Bullipedia," an open-source database "which seeks to unite all knowledge about ingredients,

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<sup>382</sup> "In 2007, a prominent young French composer named Bruno Mantovani dined at El Bulli, and was so impressed by the lengthy tasting menu [...] that he went home to Paris and composed a twenty-nine minute work for orchestra and electronic ensemble that followed and interpreted the meal dish by dish" (Andrews, *Ferran*, 215-6).

<sup>383</sup> Mantovani explained that "I wrote this work for a thousand reasons, [...]. I'm absolutely mad for gastronomy, to begin with. And the worlds of music and food seem to me intimately connected, in the immediacy with which both are experienced and the way they can challenge the senses. And remember that musicians often use food metaphors when they speak of their own work [...]. When I ate at El Bulli, I thought of my meal at once in musical terms and made notes about everything I ate" (ibid., 216).

<sup>384</sup> "Synthesis of elBulli Cuisine."

<sup>385</sup> The elBullifoundation will henceforth be referred to as the "Foundation."

<sup>386</sup> Lisa Abend, "Ferran Adrià: 'We're Creating a Genome of Cuisine,'" *Observer*, October 19, 2013, sec. Food Monthly, p. 29, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/oct/19/ferran-adria-genome-of-cuisine>.

<sup>387</sup> McInerney, "It was Delicious while it Lasted," 174, quoting Ferran Adrià.

cooking techniques and culinary history.”<sup>388</sup> The Foundation will also house a museum featuring El Bulli’s corpus of work, and will additionally sponsor a scholarship program dedicated to providing younger generations of aspiring cooks with the opportunity to experiment culinarily.<sup>389</sup>

Despite Adrià’s widely acknowledged influence throughout various artistic disciplines, examples of academic and journalistic criticism against the culinary arts’ recognition as an artistic genre abound.<sup>390</sup> Much of the rhetoric seems to rest on the notions that “food, even if it is aesthetically complex and visually attractive, does not pursue the creation of a vision or a comment on the world beyond the sensorial experience of food,”<sup>391</sup> while others fear that “the palate, not the intellect or the soul, has become the dominant authority.”<sup>392</sup> Critic and writer Jason Farago, even claims that “when a chef like Adrià is acclaimed as an artist, [...] it says we expect less from art than we used to, and food can do the rather small job as well, if not better, than a picture in a white cube. But in aspiring to the status of art, chefs unwittingly expose food’s own shallowness as a medium.”<sup>393</sup> In response to this, Adrià might counter by asking, “why can’t

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<sup>388</sup> Abend, “Ferran Adrià.” For more on Bullipedia, see: Lisa Abend, “Ferran Adrià, the Chef who Brought us elBulli, Takes his Next Step—Bullipedia,” *Observer*, November 30, 2013, sec Tech Monthly, p. 8, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/dec/02/elbulli-ferran-adria-bullipedia>.

<sup>389</sup> Abend, “Ferran Adrià.”

<sup>390</sup> Art critic Blake Gopnik has claimed that: “all but the most radical dishes at El Bulli [...] come off as relatively tame, at least when compared with the most daring contemporary art. A surprising amount of this cooking is still mostly about what goes on in the mouth: some new ingredient that comes as a shock (until you get used to it) or new flavors and textures conjured from old foods. In fine-art terms, you could say that a lot of it is still stuck in abstractland, riffing on the same old palette (or palate) of sensations; whereas today’s best art can try to say important things about the world and change the way we think about it. It’s about new content as well as novel sensations” (Gopnik, “Palate vs. Palette”). More recently, New York Times scholar and critic William Deresiewicz scathingly wrote: “But food, for all that, is not art. Both begin by addressing the senses, but that is where food stops. It is not narrative or representational, does not organize and express emotion. An apple is not a story, even if we can tell a story about it. A curry is not an idea, even if its creation is the result of one. Meals can evoke emotions, but only very roughly and generally, and only within a very limited range — comfort, delight, perhaps nostalgia, but not anger, say, or sorrow, or a thousand other things. [...] Proust on the madeleine is art; the madeleine itself is not art. A good risotto is a fine thing, but it isn’t going to give you insight into other people, allow you to see the world in a new way, or force you to take an inventory of your soul” (Deresiewicz, “A Matter of Taste?”).

<sup>391</sup> Domene-Danés, “El Bulli,” 121-2.

<sup>392</sup> Jason Farago, “Chef Ferran Adrià and the Problem of Calling Food Art,” *British Broadcasting Corporation: Culture*, January 14, 2014, accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140114-can-food-be-art>.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

eating also be feeding our brain beyond the parameters we feel comfortable with?”<sup>394</sup> Yet many of these arguments are made by people who have never even set foot in El Bulli, and—as with what occurred during Documenta—they ultimately demonstrate the need for those considering the artistic worthiness of gastronomy to be adequately educated and informed as to the nature of Adrià’s conceptual work so make proper judgments on *taste*.

Those who were privileged to experience the Pavilion G dinner, however, were able to perceive the artistic qualities of Adrià’s work. While some might have left El Bulli without being “entirely certain whether what Adrià creates is art” or not, many of them at least felt comfortable stating that: “dining at El Bulli is the most exciting aesthetic experience I’ve had this year. I felt more than a little like Keats on first looking into Chapman’s Homer.”<sup>395</sup> Additionally, others have recognized that “like many fine artists today, Adrià [...] want[s] to push beyond the comforts of obvious aesthetic satisfaction—of ‘good [T]aste’ and things that taste good—into more complex, even difficult artistic territory.”<sup>396</sup> Adrià has indeed encroached into the privileged realm of contemporary art, where his artistic concepts took precedence over all else as he was more interested in stimulating the diner’s mind than pleasing their palate. Unfortunately, however, it would appear as though the critics who fail to see the connections between Adrià’s cuisine and the arts had not properly done their research into the conceptual nature of the chef’s work, and as a result, let their art historical biases against the culinary arts cloud their judgments of *taste*.

Ultimately, the fault lies with the organizers and curators of Documenta 12, as they were unable to provide the world of contemporary art with the necessary framework to understand the artistic qualities found at Pavilion G. In fact, several curators and artists have noted that, with

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<sup>394</sup> Gopnik, “Avant-Garde Cuisine as Contemporary Art?” quoting Ferran Adrià.

<sup>395</sup> McInerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” 175.

<sup>396</sup> Gopnik, “Palate vs. Palette.”

regard to Adrià's participation, "nothing was explained by the art world" and considered "that [Adrià's involvement] wasn't fully investigated."<sup>397</sup> That is to say that, at no time throughout the course of the exhibition, were visitors provided with the means of understanding why Adrià had actually been invited to participate in an art show. For Documenta, the chef's gastronomic identity had become a "spice giving flavor to the blandness of [the] mainstream [contemporary art] culture through dynamics of appropriation and commodification, which do little to modify privileges and hegemonic power."<sup>398</sup> Resultantly, Adrià's revolutionary "culinary traditions [could] be decontextualized from their background—which would need a close cultural, historical, and social analysis to be fully understood—and used to satisfy the mainstream desire for novelty and excitement."<sup>399</sup> By the time Documenta was over, many left Kassel with the impression that the Pavilion G was nothing more than bombastic art, and that it had simply been a part of the exhibition so as to allow the privileged and influential members of the art world an opportunity to have access to a rare experience in being culinary tourists. "Culinary tourism is not necessarily about knowing or experiencing another culture but about performing a sense of adventure, adaptability, and openness to any other culture"<sup>400</sup> which is "actually [...] self-serving, [as it] enhanc[es] the consumers' cultural capital and sense of worldliness."<sup>401</sup> Essentially, it was more as though Adrià was invited to the exhibition with the intent of providing some thrilling adventure to the lucky "winners" of the Pavilion G dinner, rather than adding a new perspective or possible interpretation of what makes up contemporary art.

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<sup>397</sup> Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, 49:42-51:00.

<sup>398</sup> Parasecoli, "A Taste of Louisiana," 455.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 455-6, referring to Bell Hooks' essay, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," in *Black Looks: Race and Representations* (Boston, M.A.: South End Press, 1992), 22-3.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 456, quoting Jennie Germann Molz, "The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism," *Space and Culture* vol. 10, no. 1 (February, 2007): 77, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1206331206296383>.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, referencing Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2003).

Merely by having had Adrià participate in Documenta, the curators and organizers were implicitly positing a claim as the artistic quality of the chef's work. "If the exhibition posits a claim about the quality of the work exhibited, this claim tacitly inverts itself into a definition of quality."<sup>402</sup> The mere act of including an outsider such as the chef in one of the most prestigious international contemporary art exhibitions was in and of itself a bold statement since Documenta is regarded as the art world's arbiter of Taste. Yet, "at the same time, the assertion about the quality of the exhibited elements unfolds into a [second] assertion, about their historical importance, and this proposition in turn implies a definition of history."<sup>403</sup> In being the first chef to partake in such an event, Adrià and the Pavilion G effectively marked a new chapter in art history.<sup>404</sup> Such an occasion could have attempted to reconcile Adrià's practice with the contemporary theoretical discourse as a means of discrediting the lingering scholarly biases against gastronomy. Yet there is no evidence that indicates the curators had considered this and attempted to incorporate such a theoretical understanding into their exhibition. What should have been a momentous opportunity to reconsider and initiate a dialogue concerning the boundaries of contemporary art, was sadly unsuccessful, as Buerger and Noack's inability to contextualize the chef within the exhibition setting generated a lackluster discussion, which few were able to be a part of. As such, few of Documenta's visitors even had the chance to contribute their opinions on the matter, thereby rendering Adrià's participation inconsequential, as organizers were unable to provide visitors with the proper opportunity to examine the relationship between the culinary and visual arts.

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<sup>402</sup> Thomas McEvelley, *Art & Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity* (New York, N.Y.: McPherson & Company, 1992), 58.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> "Ferran Adrià is the first chef to have his work recognized at Documenta" (Dollase, "2007 Ferran Adrià, documenta 12 at elBulli").

Apart from the curatorial failures, Adrià and the Pavilion G were a testament to the lingering art-historical biases against the artistic worthiness of chefs and gastronomy. Significantly, these beliefs have been firmly in place for over two centuries, when eighteenth century philosophers solidified the standard of Taste, and which has since allowed scholars to maintain such a prejudicial stance.<sup>405</sup> Kant's disposition vis-à-vis the culinary arts was evident throughout his *Critique of Judgment*, in which he persuasively reasoned for the use of objective criteria to determine the beauty of a work of art.<sup>406</sup> As a result, the histories of art and aesthetics have been radically influenced by Kant's seminal text. In having used Kant's own rhetoric to show that Adrià can be regarded as a Kantian genius—thereby enabling his creations to be considered as beautiful works of art—it can be seen that critics, such as Jones, who continue to uphold the eighteenth century philosopher's beliefs, are in need of revisiting what they consider to be art. Ultimately, this also attests to the stagnancy of the entire discipline of art history, and demonstrates that it could benefit from revising its own established standards and definitions, thereby broadening and enriching one's understanding of what art has the potential to be. Simply because Kant's canonical text has been so pervasive within the contemporary aesthetic discourse, does not mean that his outdated points of view should remain engrained within our current mindset. Rather, it should encourage us to question the applications and uses of such theories (those that, like Kant's and Hume's, have become established works within the academic community) to determine whether they still maintain any legitimacy or if they are merely hindering the potential for progress. Without reconsidering such desperately needed modifications, the boundaries that constitute both art and Taste are at risk of remaining immobile.

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<sup>405</sup> See [footnote 64](#).

<sup>406</sup> See [Chapter II](#), p. 34-58.

Presently, the term “contemporary art” does little to designate or explain what that sort of art it actually is. Back in the eighteenth century, artistic creativity was confined to the classical Academy and the Salons, and was additionally restricted by the limited number potential of mediums. Today, however, the world of art is a growing and ever-changing frontier due to the rise of technology, which has expanded the artist’s repertoire with the possibility of new mediums, and where the internet facilitates the rapid dissemination of an artist’s work. Despite the excitement generated by contemporary art, many are reluctant to delineate the borders and define what it currently is. With regard to Adrià’s participation in Documenta, many visitors and critics were faced with the difficult task of analyzing the relationship between food and art, and how it could be presented side-by-side at one of the world’s most prestigious art exhibitions, thereby being forced to decide for themselves the boundaries of contemporary art. Yet Farago appears to find some problems with what he perceives to be these ever-expanding boundaries, which has “let chefs such as Adrià say they aren’t just like artists, but are artists,” and the reasons for this “are cause for concern and may even reflect something else: a shift in the boundaries of culture itself.”<sup>407</sup> Rather pessimistically, he believes that as opposed to “rehashing a tired debate” about the boundaries of art, “it seems far more profitable to advocate for higher standards in artistic achievement.”<sup>408</sup> Given the in-depth analysis of Adrià’s culinary career, as well as being aware of the supremely high standards the chef and the many critics who enjoyed the Pavilion G experience had set, it is difficult to understand why Adrià does not meet Farago’s own criteria.

Again, this attests the necessity of critics being properly informed and educated on the matters they are judging. Currently, many view critics as prophets of truth on matters of taste; many of them occasionally issue verdicts that are less than educated and—perhaps more

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<sup>407</sup> Farago, “Chef Ferran Adrià and the Problem of Calling Food Art.”

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

importantly—that are misinformed. Yet if they have proven to be good Humean critics, then their judgments should be taken into consideration. Though outdated, Hume’s requisite criteria for being a good judge of taste keeps the critic in check, since he must exercise his good sense to ensure that he has the proper conditions for viewing the work of art and is able to keep any prejudice he may have at bay.<sup>409</sup> In both of their reviews, Jones and Farago aptly demonstrated that they ignored their good sense, and as such, were unable to render accurate and well-informed judgments as they had insufficiently thought through the issues and conceptual nature of what Adrià was attempting to do.

Again, such a problem is not confined to the realm of professional criticism, as its trickling effect additionally plagues the world (particularly the online one) of amateur critics. Recently, Andrew Zimmern—the popular television show host and chef—has professed similar beliefs about the website Yelp, and maintains that such online services “essentially gives a tremendous forum for a bunch of uninformed morons” to express their opinions.<sup>410</sup> Such reviews are “tainted” and “worthless” as they are consumer-driven (rather than expert-driven) critiques, and effectively do nothing more than generate “noise” that drown out the voices of the good critics, thereby allowing their judgments to go unnoticed.<sup>411</sup> Zimmern is indifferent to the judgments of taste expressed by Yelp’s users, as they are from “people who don’t know what

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<sup>409</sup> Hume maintains that a good critic should possess “strong sense” (or alternatively “good sense”), by which he means a critic’s ability to ensure that they remain free from prejudice (Korsmeyer, “Hume’s Standard of Taste,” 185).

<sup>410</sup> Paula Forbes, “Zimmern Calls Yelp a ‘Forum for Uninformed Morons,’” *Eater National*, December 3, 2012, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2012/12/03/andrew-zimmern-calls-yelp-a-forum-for-uninformed-morons.php>, quoting Andrew Zimmern.

<sup>411</sup> Amy McKeever, “Andrew Zimmern on the Power and Problems of Yelp,” *Eater National*, March 7, 2014, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2014/03/07/andrew-zimmern-yelp-interview.php>. “I do not care what people — who I don’t know where they live, don’t know what their eating habits are, don’t know what sort of expertise or standards they bring to the experience — telling me what they think of a” certain dish (ibid., quoting Andrew Zimmern).

they're talking about, shouting over the people who do."<sup>412</sup> Though his commentary might be a little brash, his sentiments echo Kant's own opinions on the matter, as subjectivity in matters of *taste* was one of the reasons why the latter advocated against the artistic recognition of the culinary arts.<sup>413</sup> Zimmern rightfully finds such amateur-driven reviewing systems to be of great concern, as critics on Yelp (and other, similar services) wield great influence and help shape popular contemporary taste. Recent studies by the University of Georgia and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have bolstered Zimmern's claims, as the two universities found that factors such as: other users' reviews, type of cuisine served by the restaurant, and even the weather could negatively affect a critic's judgment.<sup>414</sup> To adequately address the issue, society needs to engage "in more of a civic discourse about whether or not [these online, amateur-driven forums have] value, and who [they have] value for," a discussion which would allow people to reach their own conclusions on matters of taste.<sup>415</sup> Such a dialogue would render evident the present need to reevaluate how those who help dictate *taste* render their judgments, as it would weed out the uninformed critics, thereby ensuring that the critics who remain are ones whom society can both trust their opinions and safely turn to in order to emulate their verdicts.

Inherently, this entire paper is in and of itself a critique—albeit a positive one—of Adrià's participation in Documenta. The extensive and necessary research which was needed for this project (and at the very least, has provided the reader with enough information so as to form

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<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> "For though a man enumerate to me all the ingredients of a dish, and remark that each is separately pleasant to me and further extol with justice the wholesomeness of this particular food—yet am I deaf to all these reasons; I try the dish with *my* tongue and my palate, and thereafter (and not according to universal principles) do I pass my judgment" (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 126-7).

<sup>414</sup> Kim Severson, "Online Reviews? Keep This in Mind," *New York Times*, April 2, 2014, sec. Dining & Wine, p. D27, accessed April 8, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/dining/online-reviews-keep-this-in-mind.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/dining/online-reviews-keep-this-in-mind.html?_r=0); and Carolyn Y. Johnson, "Study Finds Online ratings Easily Overinflated," *Boston Globe Online*, August 8, 2013, accessed April 8, 2014, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/science/2013/08/08/the-pitfalls-crowdsourcing-online-ratings-vulnerable-bias/pw6HhJrZ3ZkP6oG6XYM2wO/story.html>.

<sup>415</sup> McKeever, "Andrew Zimmern on the Power and Problems of Yelp."

their own opinion on the matter), has given way to an objective review of the chef's conceptual work and its relation to the world of art, ultimately demonstrating that Adrià's inclusion in the exhibition was not as farfetched as many had made it out to be. Searle notes that "there [were] a number of genuinely challenging dishes, [and] it is very rare that one can say that about art, though it is a platitude all too often bandied about."<sup>416</sup> Granted the "challenging" qualities of chef's compositions are different from those found in works of art, as they do not require one to contemplate over the atrocities taking place around the globe or problems associated with race; but through his creations, the chef was able to force his diners to rethink about the very elemental nature of gastronomy and its established principles, thereby causing some of them a certain amount of discomfort, as Adrià was destabilizing the entire culinary foundation on which they had come to be familiar with. The chef not only disrupted traditional eating habits, but he also succeeded in unsettling the art world, which in the end, seems to be the reason why he participated in Documenta. The curators and the chef hoped to spur a dialogue of including new categories as a means of broadening artistic possibilities and modes of thought by attempting to construct the necessary foundation to further both this discussion and the one surrounding the definition of what constitutes art.

In summation, it is possible to reconcile the dialogue concerning Adrià's artistic practice within the art-historical discourse, as the experience offered at Pavilion G surpassed the realm of food and into that of art. Again, the aesthetic experience many were said to have felt during their time at El Bulli did not result from the taste of the chef's creations; rather, it was the totality of the experience that generated such sentiments. Though some might still not accept the full-fledged artistic nature of what Adrià does, it cannot be denied that he was able to elicit emotional reactions that were, at the very least, extremely similar to one felt during an aesthetic encounter.

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<sup>416</sup> Searle, "Should I Eat it or Frame it?" 7.

There are, of course, other chefs who are doing similar work who should also be a part of this scholarly discussion, as they are the ones who will broaden the discipline, and eventually replace Adrià to leave their own mark on haute-cuisine. Chefs such as Heston Blumenthal,<sup>417</sup> the Roca brothers (Juan, Josep, and Jordi),<sup>418</sup> José Andrés,<sup>419</sup> Daniel Patterson,<sup>420</sup> René Redzepi,<sup>421</sup> Andoni Luis Aduriz,<sup>422</sup> Juan Mari Arzak,<sup>423</sup> Daniel Humm,<sup>424</sup> Alex Atala,<sup>425</sup> and David Kinch,<sup>426</sup> are all on a daily basis, influencing the way we see and understand food; and are doing it through one of the few mediums that can truly speak to all humans. While the philosophy of food and cooking unite these chefs, each of them is deserving of scholarly attention as they are using their art in a specific way so as to (among other issues) raise awareness of agricultural and farming practices, or of local and global history, or even of differences between various cultures. So while not all chefs are worthy of being considered for their artistic creativity or capabilities, it is evident that Adrià pushed beyond mere cookery and provided his guests with the means to think of food in a different way. The art world can only enrich itself by including Adrià's artistry into its exclusive domain, as the chef is effectively furthering established artistic boundaries, as well as enabling people to comprehend the world and cultural values from an entirely different perspective. In conclusion, it is clear that the old Latin idiom was mistaken, as this paper has proven that matters of *taste* can be disputed.

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<sup>417</sup> Executive chef and owner of *The Fat Duck*, Bray, England, <http://www.thefatduck.co.uk/>.

<sup>418</sup> Executive chefs and owners of *El Celler de Can Roca*, Girona, Spain, <http://www.cellercanroca.com/index.htm>.

<sup>419</sup> Executive chef and co-owner of minibar by José Andrés, Washington D.C., USA, <http://www.minibarbyjoseandres.com/>.

<sup>420</sup> Executive chef and owner of *Coi*, San Francisco, C.A., USA, <http://coirestaurant.com/>.

<sup>421</sup> Executive chef and co-owner of *Noma*, Copenhagen, Denmark, <http://noma.dk/>.

<sup>422</sup> Executive chef and owner of *Mugaritz*, San Sebastián, Spain, <http://www.mugaritz.com/>.

<sup>423</sup> Executive chef and owner of *Arzak*, San Sebastián, Spain, <http://www.arzak.info/index.html>.

<sup>424</sup> Executive chef and co-owner of *Eleven Madison Park*, New York City, N.Y., USA, <http://elevenmadisonpark.com/>.

<sup>425</sup> Executive chef and owner of *D.O.M.*, São Paulo, Brazil, [www.domrestaurante.com.br/](http://www.domrestaurante.com.br/).

<sup>426</sup> Executive chef and owner of *Manresa*, Los Gatos, C.A., USA, <http://www.manresarestaurant.com/>.

## APPENDIX I

### Excerpt from the Documenta 12 exhibition catalog

**2007**

**FERRAN ADRIÀ**

elBulli, Roses

Ferran Adrià is the first chef to have his work recognized at documenta. The forty-five-year-old Catalan from the restaurant [E] Bulli in Roses has followed his own exceptional path and developed accordingly, leading him to become the most famous chef of our day and his name has become synonymous with his avant-garde culinary arts. His extensive six-volume catalogue raisonné, *elBulli 1983-2005*, which looks like an art catalogue, reveals the self-taught chef's systematic study of all forms of creative cookery since the 1980s. Adrià looks to intensify the degustation experience by unsettling normal eating habits. A process which soon yields spectacular results. He deconstructs "normal" forms of food by changing their aggregate states while still maintaining the aromas (for example, his *vegetable stew in textures* of 1994, in which the vegetables appear as gelato, mousse, or froth). Creations such as his tagliatelle made from aspic strips, his foams from the siphon (*Espumas*), his mock salmon caviar, the *spherical ravioli*, or his work with liquid nitrogen have all been copied throughout the world. In addition to these new basic techniques, which are persistently and playfully varied and often visually staged as fine arts, Adrià has also been successful in expanding the traditional concept of food, tied largely to aroma, to include all the senses. The complex compositions developed from his extended repertoire of techniques, such as *Terroso* (with a focus on "earthy" aromas) or *Deshielo 2005* have an independence, a breadth of appeal and, not least, a sensual character of their own that makes them unique.<sup>427</sup>

—Jürgen Dollase

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<sup>427</sup> This text originally appeared in: *Documenta 12 Kassel, 16/06-23/09, 2007, Catalog*, edited by Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2007), 204.

## APPENDIX II

Transcript of interview between Jean Nihoul and Ferran Adrià at Harvard University, Cambridge M.A., December 2, 2013. Adrià was given copies of the questions (both in Spanish and English) before the interview, he responded in Spanish, while a colleague of his translated for Jean. Unfortunately, the recorder did not start recording until Adrià was halfway through the first question.

**Jean Nihoul (JN):** You were invited to participate in other art exhibitions (namely, at the Tate Modern and Barcelona’s Museum of Contemporary Art) prior to Documenta 12, what led you to decide to accept the invitation for this particular event? What was it about this specific exhibition that led you to believe that this was the appropriate platform to try and understand “what kind of a relationship [you] had with the world of art?”<sup>428</sup>

**Ferran Adrià (FA):** [...] it happened with design, fashion, architecture, whereas cooking could be more violent than others, the thing is, the problem has been that I could care less. So the art world has been on shaky territory the world of creativity and art, they’ve made a space, a location, cooking is cooking, it has its own perimeter, and it can flirt with other disciplines, it’s not going into the artistic sphere that is normally understood, its true then that recently its changed, for example you can see how the exhibition from Barcelona and Somerset House, and the Museum of Science in Boston, there is a different way that the culinary world has this dialogue with the artistic world, they’re not an exhibition about a restaurant, but it’s true that you can make an exhibition about anything it doesn’t have to be just art, it can be about butterflies! Not because it’s an exhibition, it doesn’t necessarily have to be within the context of art. And surely the most important exhibition is the one at the drawing center, because it’s very serious because it’s the most important museum in the world with drawing, why did I accept? Because it was an exhibition about the creative process rather than about the work itself. In a sense, you live this process while being in the exhibition, so in the exhibitions they’ve had in the past two years, it’s never been about the final product, more or less, it’s a consequence of Documenta’s invitation.

**JN:** Granted, you had to establish the “G-Pavilion” at elBulli—many kilometers from Kassel—for practical reasons; but do you think this harmed the potential to have your exhibition properly contextualized within Documenta? Specifically, the location affected the general access (or lack thereof) to the Pavilion G, since so few guests had the opportunity to experience the dinner at El Bulli, do you think this ultimately affected the impact of you being featured in the exhibition? Did it prevent the debate on the artistic status of the culinary arts from reaching or being understood by the visitors?

**FA:** I had to do what I had to do, if you want to live and experience in the culinary sphere it has to be at El Bulli, I mean if you want to go to the theatre you go to the theatre, you don’t take the

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<sup>428</sup> McLaughlin, “Portrait of the Artist as Chef.”

theatre to a museum, if I had taken [the food] to Documenta, it would have been like catering. After seven years, I still think that we did what we had to do.

**JN:** But what about the New York Drawing Center exhibition? Couldn't you have just used that curatorial model at Documenta?

**FA:** No, because at Documenta we had to take the actual work; at the Drawing Center, it's not required. But it's true that what we do in New York could have been at Documenta. But particularly at Documenta 12 they talked about the actual work, but the Drawing Center could have been taken to Documenta. But, in being the first chef invited ever, we felt that it had to be pretty radical. It's a theatre and you watch in the theatre, you go to the opera to see the opera, and gastronomy you live it at a restaurant. We could have put any different details and other things that we wanted, but that's what we decided.

**JN:** So overall, do you think that your participation in Documenta was successful in generating this dialogue on the intersections of the culinary and visual arts?

**FA:** Until then, it was the most important/intellectual experience I have had, because it was conceptualizing creativity in the cooking.

**JN:** Where do you think the conversation on merging the culinary and visual arts is now?

**FA:** The last reflection on this was really *El Somni*,<sup>429</sup> or *The Dream*, which was made by the Roca brothers, which was an experiment to see if this could work. Do you know about the project?

**JN:** No, not really.

**FA:** You should look up the video. To what point does cooking need other elements to really fulfill an experience? To what point gastronomy can be decontextualized from a restaurant? Because of course there is this reflection now to you see if you can separate the two. It isn't like a performance, where cooking and what's in its surrounding can enter into dialogue and be one to see how it should be, what's now, the thing is that cooking is really, really good, so the artist has to be very, very good, if not, it won't work, it has to be of equal caliber, otherwise it would be of no value.

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<sup>429</sup> "The film *El Somni* is a journey through the world of ideas, creativity and thoughts. It aims to break the boundaries between artistic disciplines, between space and ideas to create a marriage of opera and cuisine. Art and thought are the twin engines of this project which offers the experience of a dinner which never existed, of an unbelievable film, of the birth of new tools for creativity, all bearing the name of Barcelona. This is the adventure of the marriage between cooking and art in the service of thought and emotion. The plot moves through the same 12 concepts which define the libretto of the opera, providing details and a new dimension to the story line"; see: Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, "El Somni," 2014, accessed March 10, 2014, [http://www.berlinale.de/en/programm/berlinale\\_programm/datenblatt.php?film\\_id=20148217#tab=filmStills](http://www.berlinale.de/en/programm/berlinale_programm/datenblatt.php?film_id=20148217#tab=filmStills). For more information on the film, see: Juan, Josep, and Jordi Roca, *El Somni*, directed by Franc Aleu (Barcelona, Spain: MediaPro, 2014), accessed March 10, 2014, <http://www.elsomni.cat/en/>.

**JN:** Lastly, do you see the elBullifoundation furthering this discussion or having any impact on this?

**FA:** So we're going to continue it within the elBullifoundation, it's not a discussion, it's more of a dialogue. The discussion is if cooking is art, what's the worth in that? In the end, for me, our participation in Documenta had to have value and was valuable for the reflection of what is cooking today? It today it makes sense, to make this closed, elitist space around the art world and the intellectual level. The world is changing, and the art world has to change with it. There are a lot of contemporary museums that are empty, and there are many with great works, it's not a problem of the work, something else is not working.

For a full audio file of the interview, see: <http://jeannahoul.com/files/87070830.wmv> (accessed April 11, 2014).

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After the interview, Adrià delivered a lecture entitled “The Evolution of Culinary Theory,” for Harvard University’s Science & Cooking Lecture Series (for more, see: <http://www.seas.harvard.edu/cooking>). The talk was fascinating, and provided me with a better understanding as to how the chef thinks about food on a daily basis. Below is a review of the lecture, which nicely summarizes what the chef spoke about.

#### Ferran Adrià at Harvard: The Evolution of Culinary Theory

Harvard’s Science & Cooking lecture series continued last night with its penultimate installment for the season: Ferran Adrià spoke on the evolution of culinary theory. Adrià has lots of questions but few answers, and that’s partly what drove him the reinvent *elBulli*, closing the restaurant in order to open the upcoming elBulliFoundation, an interdisciplinary “creativity center,” in 2015.

The majority of Adrià’s lecture consisted of thought experiments posed through questions, often seemingly simple “yes or no” questions on the nature of the culinary knowledge base. Speaking through a translator, he zeroed in on individuals, triumphantly challenging their assertions and then charging ahead to the next question, digging towards a deeper theoretical level while leaving the answer unclear. Obscuring the line between “yes” and “no” seems to be Adrià’s M.O., as interviews with him yield the same results. When he spoke with Eater’s Joshua David Stein in 2010, for example, Stein observed: “He also has a tendency to respond by saying either, ‘No, no, no’ or ‘Yes, yes, yes’ and they both appear to mean the same thing.”

When the elBulli closure was announced in 2010, mixed messages were perpetuated by the media and by Adrià himself, leading to months of confusion about the reasons for the closure, whether it would be permanent, and what would come next. “Is he broke? Is he burned out?” Adrià recounted to Eater in late 2011. “It’s a matter of excess information, and also the Bulli phenomenon. There are lots of myths, and no one wants to demystify.”

There are thousands of questions, starting with the broad ones: What is cooking? What is cuisine? Adrià provided background on the closure at the start of last night's lecture, and in the end, it seems that the thesis of the talk was also the driving factor behind elBulli's transformation: culinary theory — the whole knowledge base behind the world of cooking — needs to be explored and classified so that everyone is on the same page. There are thousands of questions, starting with the broad ones: *What is cooking? What is cuisine?* “One of the reasons why we wanted to stop was to ask ourselves, ‘Who are we?’” Adrià said last night. Wylie Dufresne drove home the same point in his lecture three weeks ago, revealing the “dirty little secret of chefs” to be that they don't know what they're doing; he created *wd~50* to explore seemingly basic questions, like “What is cooking?”

“If we wanted elBulli not to die, we had to close the restaurant. We closed elBulli to not have to close elBulli,” Adrià explained. The idea was to take a sabbatical to explore the essential questions, and this exploration will manifest itself as elBulliFoundation, a “creativity center” that will begin construction next year, and other massive undertakings such as BulliPedia, the “world's first culinary wiki.” A few years ago, the foundation was “a crazy thing, a dream,” Adrià said last night, but now it is a “reality.”

So, the questions. Adrià began with the largest: What is cooking? Or, what is cuisine? Both were posed fairly interchangeably through Adrià's translator at the lecture. “When a monkey peels a banana, is he cooking? Yes or no?” Adrià asked. The audience consensus leaned towards no. “Why no? What if *I* peel a banana for breakfast?” He continued to push, using examples like an oyster on a plate. Does the act of shucking it mean that you're cooking?

Going further: “When we are eating, are we cooking?” While it may seem that the answer is simply no if the eater is not also the cook, Adrià gave another perspective. Imagine you're served sashimi with ginger and wasabi. If you put the wasabi on the sashimi and then eat the ginger, that's one dish. Your dining companion ate some ginger, then some sashimi, and then the wasabi. That's another dish. You've created different dishes, so *are* you cooking? And he continued with fondue. Are you the cook or the eater?

His solution is to call it *a culinary process* instead of simply cuisine. There are multiple players involved — the cook, the eater — and the roles can overlap. Taking it another step further, what if beverages are added to the mix? A sommelier comes by to suggest a wine pairing for the fondue. Now it's more than a culinary process; it's a *gastronomic* process.

Next, Adrià traced a winding timeline through culinary history, making his first stop over a million years ago with *Homo habilis*, our earliest ancestor in the *Homo* genus. We know they walked and ate, and there's evidence that they used primitive stone tools. But how do we know what they drank: water? Fruit juices? We don't know, so we have to compile what we *do* know and reflect on it to make inferences. The same applies to any era. Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics show rabbits, but “I didn't know if they were eating the rabbits or doing magic tricks,” said Adrià. By tracing clues throughout history, we can create a more complete picture.

As a corollary to the culinary timeline, Adrià challenged the audience to determine the meaning of “traditional” cuisine. “Do you like traditional cuisine? Of course you do. So, what's

traditional cuisine?” How long does it take before something can be considered “traditional,” and does it depend on the borders of a country? A different boundary? If McDonald’s has been popular in Spain for decades, is McDonald’s traditional Spanish food?

“I didn’t make a single statement so far,” noted Adrià as he reached the final section of his lecture. “I’ve been asking questions.” The line of questioning continued as he drove home his point that no one is on the same page of culinary theory.

An easy question, he claimed. “What is fruit?” One audience member defined it as an ovary that you eat. “So you see eggplants next to bananas at the supermarket?” Another audience member noted that the culinary and botanical definitions of fruit are different, but Adrià kept pushing for a definition that was not going to materialize.

Fine, an easier question, he continued. “What’s chicken?” Audience: “A bird.” Adrià: “But an ostrich is a bird, too.” He scrawled a diagram on the board, trying to draw out a conclusion about the difference between male and female chickens, young and old, but the point was obscured partly due to the language barrier regarding the multiple words for chickens of different ages and genders. “If it’s any consolation, the best cooks in the world didn’t guess what is fruit and what is chicken,” he said.

The key point, he explained, is that if we can’t agree on definitions for fruit, for chicken, how can we improve? In the culinary world, “we lack classifications altogether,” and it’s “no laughing matter” that an industry has no clear consensus on thousands of questions like this. There’s not enough time for cooks to reflect, read, and learn from history, he explained, and that’s where the problems come from. We need to “reset” our mind to find context and clarity. While it’s impossible to know everything about everything — there are 3,000 varieties of tomatoes, he exclaimed — we can help technology help us. “So now, humans, we really have to help machines: reflecting, classifying, synthesizing information.”

— Rachel Leah Blumenthal

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## Illustrations

01/07/2007

hot frozen gin fizz  
spherical-l green olives  
cosmopolitan-mallow  
pineapple-LYO  
mango and African marigold flower croquant leaf  
hibiscus paper with blackcurrants and eucalyptus  
banana and sweetcorn dentelle  
beetroot and yoghurt meringue/profiterole  
walnut *catanias*  
savoury blackcurrant, yoghurt and pistachio chocolate  
parmesan soufflés  
virgin olive oil caramel spring  
mandarin bonbon/peanut and curry palet  
golden egg  
pistachio cake with yoghurt *espuma*  
black sesame and miso sponge cake  
flower paper  
raspberry fondant with wasabi and raspberry vinegar  
tiger nut milk flowers  
sweet almonds with their own oil  
oyster yoghurt with px tempura  
rock mussels with a hint of lemon, orange and fennel  
butter bean with Joselito streaky Iberian pork and black garlic  
frozen parmesan air with muesli  
dashi jelly with miso caviar  
anchovy with ham, basil flower and yoghurt milk skin  
pine dacquoise  
tender pine nut shells  
thai pink grapefruit risotto with coconut and white sesame  
Padrón pepper turnovers with their jus and liquorice  
polenta gnocchi with coffee, saffron flavoured milk skin and capers  
hot razor clams with laurenica seaweed  
teriyaki mackerel belly  
nasturtium leaf with smoked eel and veal marrow  
hare jus with blackcurrant-flavoured apple jelly-CRU  
wool 2007  
frosted blackcurrants  
orchid  
  
morphs...

Figure 1: Sample menu for El Bulli's Pavilion G dinner for Documenta 12  
(Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 110-1).

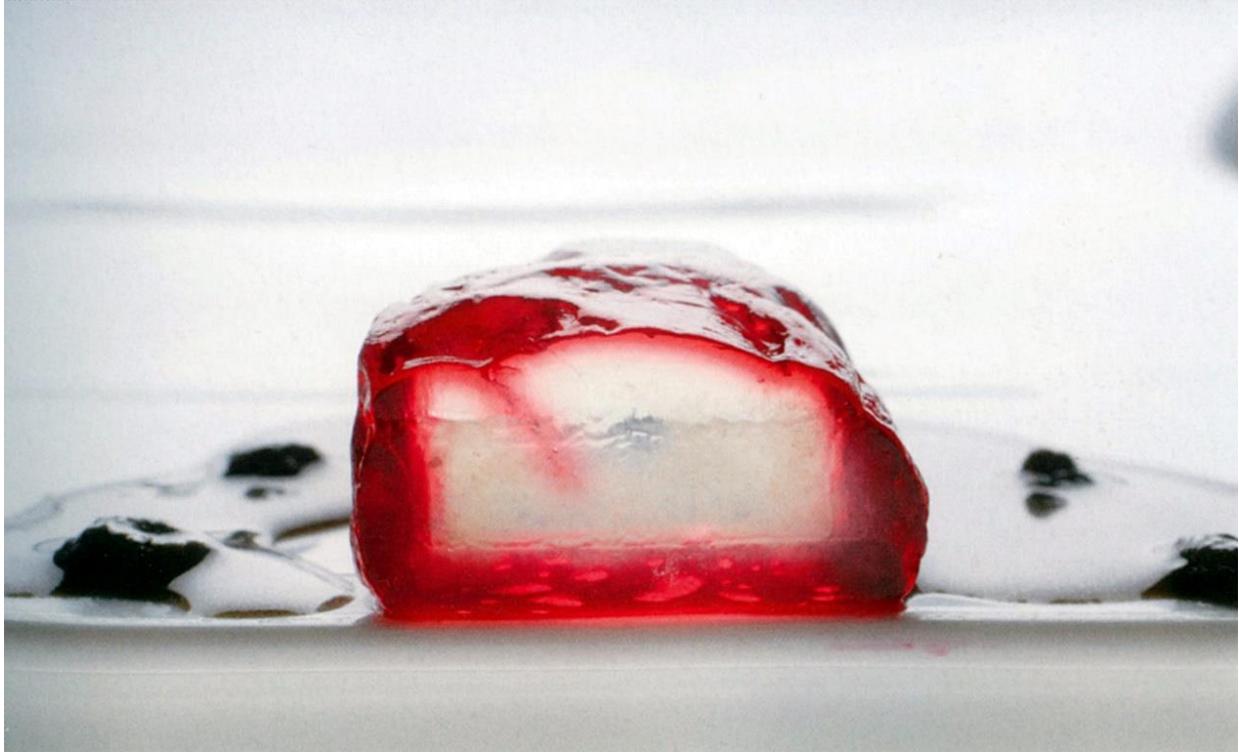


Figure 2: *1406/ Hare Jus with Blackcurrant-Flavored Apple Jelly-CRU*, Ferran Adrià, 2007.  
Photograph by Francesc Guillamet ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).

- Hot apple jelly CRU
- Hare essence
- Deconstruction of a classic game dish<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 129.



Figure 3: Rirkrit Tiravanija posing for exhibition, *Soup/No Soup*, 2012, Le Grand Palais, Paris, France. Photograph by Andreas Zobe (<http://www.exponaute.com/magazine/2012/04/07/soupe-populaire-au-grand-palais/>, accessed March 30, 2014).

DOCUMENTA  
KASSEL  
16/06 — 23/09  
2007



**elBulli is a documenta 12 venue**

"I have invited Ferran Adrià because he has succeeded in generating his own aesthetic which has become something very influential within the international scene. This is what I am interested in and not whether people consider it to be art or not. It is important to say that artistic intelligence doesn't manifest itself in a particular medium, that art doesn't have to be identified simply with photography, sculpture and painting etc., or with cooking in general; however, under certain conditions, it can become art." Roger M. Buergel

For Ferran Adrià, the invitation from the documenta 12 meant "developing the form of his artistic contribution from the ground up."

The form Ferran Adrià has found to link the culinary world of avant-garde cuisine to the world of art consists in simply turning his restaurant elBulli in Cala Montjoi (English: *small bay of Montjoi*) into a documenta 12 exhibition site. Any other form would have meant foregoing the unique experience of a visit to elBulli and would therefore not have done justice to Ferran Adrià's complex culinary art. For according to Adrià "only those who eat can understand".

As a result, throughout the 100 days, the 50 guests received by Adrià each evening in the fully-booked elBulli will also become exhibition visitors. But how will elBulli be integrated into the documenta 12 in Kassel in a concrete manner? This will be achieved through the visitors to the documenta 12 in Kassel. Arbitrarily selected by Roger M. Buergel, they will be asked whether they would like to experience an authentic evening meal at elBulli, taking a short trip to the Cala Montjoi. So visitors of documenta travel to Adrià but "applicants have already lost" (Roger M. Buergel).

Ferran Adrià believes that his intervention includes reflections and discussions between different people from the fields of art and cuisine. He was joined by Marta Arzak, Assistant Director for Education at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and Josep Maria Pinto, co-author of the catalogue „El Bulli 1998 – 2002“in developing the work.

With the support of Ajuntament de Roses; Caixa Girona; Patronat de Turisme

Figure 4: The Documenta 12 Press Release, used to announce Adrià's participation in the exhibition ([http://www.documenta12.de/fileadmin/pdf/PM/Adria\\_%20en.pdf](http://www.documenta12.de/fileadmin/pdf/PM/Adria_%20en.pdf), accessed November 7, 2013).



Figure 5: the El Bulli open-kitchen before and during service.  
Photographs by Maribel Ruiz de Erenchun ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).



Figure 6: 621/ Hot Frozen Gin Fizz, Ferran Adrià, 2000.  
Photograph by Francesc Guillamet ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).

- Hot/cold cocktail
- Reworking of the classic gin fizz<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 111.



Figure 7: *1096/ Spherical-I Green Olives*, Ferran Adrià, 2005.  
Photograph by Francesc Guillamet ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).

- Inverse spherification of olive jus
- Reworking of a local concept: olives to accompany an aperitif<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 112.

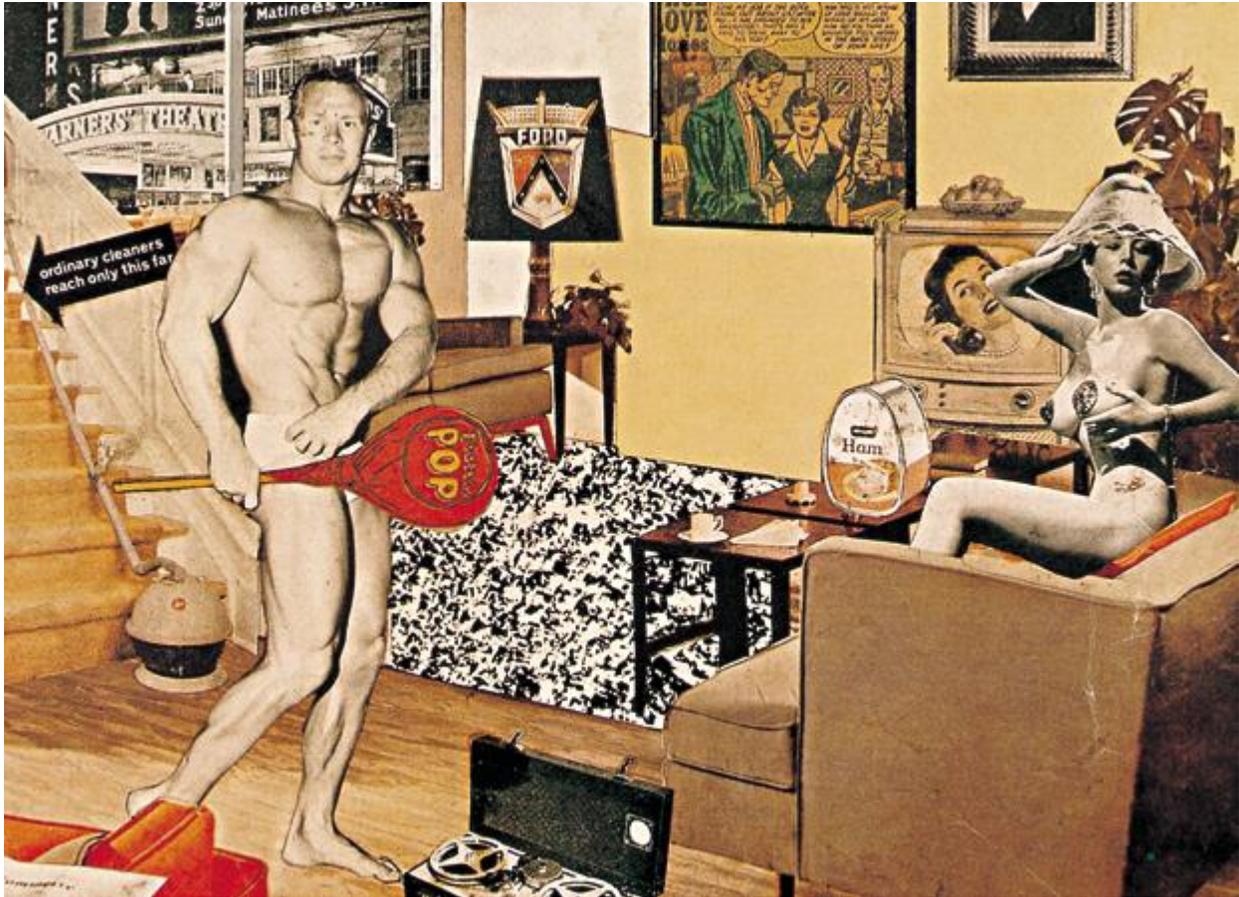


Figure 8: *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* Richard Hamilton, 1956, Collage, 26 x 24.8 cm, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany.



Figure 9: Photograph by Ferran Adrià (1999), for Richard Hamilton's *Polaroid Portraits*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart, Germany: Mayer, 2001) (Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 59).



Figure 10: *1364/ Frozen Parmesan Air with Muesli*, Ferran Adrià, 2004.  
Photograph by Francesc Guillamet ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).

- Frozen parmesan air
- A novel way of serving: in polystyrene
- Commercially-processed product made in the kitchen: muesli<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 124.



**Figure 11:** *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, Marcel Duchamp (originally 1915-23), reconstruction by Richard Hamilton (1965-6), lower panel remade 1985, oil, lead, dust, and varnish on glass, 277.5 x 175.9 cm, Tate Modern, London, England (<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-the-bride-stripped-bare-by-her-bachelors-even-the-large-glass-t02011>, accessed March, 30, 2014).



Figure 12: *1112/ Virgin Olive Oil Caramel Spring*, Ferran Adrià, 2005.  
Photograph by Francesc Guillamet ([www.elbulli.com](http://www.elbulli.com)).

- Virgin olive oil caramel
- Caramel spring made using an electric screwdriver
- Spring served in a jewelry box (sixth sense/novel way of serving)<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 117.