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IMAGINED UTOPIAS AND IMPROVISED EATING — THE ECO-GASTRONOMY PROJECT GOES DOWN UNDER

From November 14 to December 6, 2016, the **Eco-Gastronomy Project** visits Melbourne, Australia, with events focused on practice-based learning, food knowledge frameworks, and the unwritten scripts that guide food behaviours. This constitutes the tenth phase of the project and the fourteenth country to be visited.

Project director **David Szanto** will be a featured participant at the 21st **Symposium of Australian Gastronomy**, the theme of which is 'Utopian Appetites'. Interventions include a plenary presentation with former **Nordic Food Lab** researcher **Josh Evans**, a food performance that turns audience members into actors, and a lunch in which eaters navigate a series of unfamiliar food rules. In the weeks preceding the symposium, David will be in residence at **William Angliss Institute**, where he will conduct a set of workshops with faculty and students, focusing on material practice in food education. A public workshop on November 22 and 24, entitled "**Frameworks and Ecologies**," will explore perceptions and preconceptions about food systems, including how they influence our choices and actions.

"We are excited to expose the William Angliss students and faculty to the Eco-Gastronomy Project, as well as the broader food community in Melbourne," says William Angliss lecturer and symposium co-convenor, **Kelly Donati**. "The Symposium of Australian Gastronomy has always dealt with issues that are locally relevant while also incorporating new thinking about food from around the world, which makes David's participation particularly apt."

As the Eco-Gastronomy Project comes to the end of Phase One, the Melbourne visit marks an important culmination of the twenty-five events that the project has organized to date. Says David Szanto, "The symposium's theme of 'utopia' is distinctive, given that it encompasses the notion of an 'ideal place' of food, but also the reality that no place is ideal. The Eco-Gastronomy Project has been a powerful reminder of this: all food places incorporate fairness and injustice, sustainability and exploitation, deliciousness and distaste. How we engage with that complexity is what matters."

A collaboration between UNISG and local partners, the Eco-Gastronomy project aims to develop an ecological-philosophical vision of food, gathering success stories and best practices from multiple regions around the world. For more information, see the attached backgrounder or go to www.unisg.it/ecogastronomy.

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For more about the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, see www.gastronomers.net.

For workshop details, see the poster at unisg.it/ecogastronomy.

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BACKGROUND

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WHAT IS ECO-GASTRONOMY?

Eco-gastronomy is a concept that views food systems through an ecological-philosophical perspective. It is an approach that merges the 'thinking-doing' of food (gastronomy) with an acknowledgement that when we think and do things with food, many different effects are produced. Sometimes these effects happen in real time, and sometimes later; sometimes they happen close to home, and sometimes further away.

Importantly, eco-gastronomy recognizes that food and food systems are made up of material elements, language and representation, and interactive processes. This means that any interaction with food can produce political transformations, environmental and social change, shifts in symbolic and conceptual meaning, as well combinations of all of these.

Eco-gastronomy is not limited to industry, or agriculture, or academia—it encompasses all food realms. It indelibly links food and humans, while bringing attention to the responsibility that all people have for the health and well-being of our food ways—producers, activists, cooks, academics, artists, politicians, and industrialists alike.

To date, the Eco-Gastronomy Project has visited Seoul, Mexico City, Singapore, Dili (Timor-Leste), Edinburgh, Wrocław (Poland), Oslo, Copenhagen, Dublin, Toronto, Quito, and Torino. The final destination for 2016 is Melbourne, Australia.

UNISG AND DAVID SZANTO

The University of Gastronomic Sciences was founded in Italy in 2004 by Slow Food International. It offers undergraduate and graduate programs involving multi-experiential learning in classrooms, workshops, and in the field. The university's aim is to build academic credibility for gastronomy while acknowledging that learning about food takes place through the mind and body, the heart and gut, as well as through all of our senses. To date, nearly 2000 students from 75 countries have attended.

Dr. David Szanto was one of the first English-language master students at UNISG in 2005, going on to work for the school in communications and outreach, as an instructor and program director, and now as UNISG's professor-at-large. In 2015, he earned a PhD in gastronomy from Concordia University in Montreal (Canada), the first of its kind.