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FOOD MEMORIES AND DESERTED KITCHENS — THE ECO-GASTRONOMY PROJECT VISITS THE TWIN CITIES

From October 14 to 21, 2016, the **Eco-Gastronomy Project** visits the U.S. cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, focusing on food memory, architecture and space, and collaborative cooking. This constitutes the ninth phase of the project and the thirteenth country to be visited.

Project director **David Szanto** will be a resident fellow of the **Sustainability Office** at **Hamline University** in St. Paul, leading and participating in several encounters with students, faculty, and the local community. On October 17, he will give a public talk dealing with personal memory in the context of local and global gastronomy, including the tension between past food habits and contemporary environmental issues. David will also lead a speculative tour of some of Hamline's disused historic kitchens, and guide students through a memory workshop about their own childhood kitchens. On October 19, a collaborative dinner with Hamline students and members of the surrounding community will serve up a hybrid meal of past, present, and personal, while creating an opportunity for new memory-making.

Hamline's **Sustainability Program** focuses on an integrative model including food, materials, and access to the conditions that enable human beings to live together. "Hamline's approach to sustainability is to address the conditions under which all people can thrive in the long term," says program director **Valentine Cadieux**. "Participating in the practice of sustainability is challenging, and requires constant negotiation about what is desirable, how social organization works, and how to approach the future."

An important center of agrifood processing, the Twin Cities were chosen for the Eco-Gastronomy Project because of their unique rural and urban intersections. "Minneapolis—the Flour City—is a place with a very rich food culture, full of remarkable people doing important work in community, commercial, and academic contexts. Together with St. Paul, it represents a burgeoning food scene," says David Szanto. "I'm particularly excited to get to know Dr. Cadieux and her colleagues' **Making the Best of It** project, which reinterprets 'sustainability' in very progressive ways, using food as an entry point for engaging with climate change."

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 *Making the Best of It*, see www.makingthebestofit.today.

For event 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.