

FOOD AND SMELL

THE PERCEPTION OF FLAVOURS AND SOCIO-POLITICS OF FOOD AROMAS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY



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ABSTRACT

While studying the relationships between **food**, **smell** and **atmospheres**, this research project aims at interpreting olfaction as an **ecological modality of perceiving**. On the one hand, smell is tightly connected with the **act of eating** and, in general, with the “**(in)edible**” as an **aesthetic** but also **ethical** category; on the other hand, food and flavours are emblematic “**atmospheric sources**” for their inherently **affective nature**, exemplifying the porous boundaries between subject and the environment, knowing and feeling, identity and alterity.

Although atmospheres reveal themselves synaesthetically, many scholars have stressed smell’s **atmospheric primacy**. Among other things, ambiances are firstly *sniffs*. Hence, smell encourages a phenomenological comprehension of the environment, that is, in the **pre-dimensional presence** on which **felt-bodily experience** is incardinated.

In the light of contemporary artistic, gastronomic and marketing practices (**olfactory arts**, **aerosol cuisine**, **scent marketing**, etc.), where **food aromas** are staged to convey **emotions** and to drive **consumer behaviour**, the idea of **air design** and, specifically, of **olfactory foodification** seems to capture the essence of today’s urban and domestic dwelling. For that reason, key concept is here **osmosphere**: composed of ὀσμή (smell, odour) and σφαῖρα (sphere, globe), it is my neologism for stressing the immersive, unavoidable and “round” dimension of the olfactory and felt space in which every entity is immersed, at the same time creating it. Concurrently, the olfactory irradiance, providing persons, commodities, situations and places with an aura (a vague but unique *flavour*), is often food-driven, and opens at a continuous and mutual **play of negotiation** and adjustment, with substantial **sociological** and **political implications**.

MAIN SOURCES

PHILOSOPHY

(Hermann Schmitz, Gernot Böhme, Tonino Griffero, Gaston Bachelard, Georg Simmel, Peter Sloterdijk)

PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHOPATOLOGY, PERCEPTION STUDIES

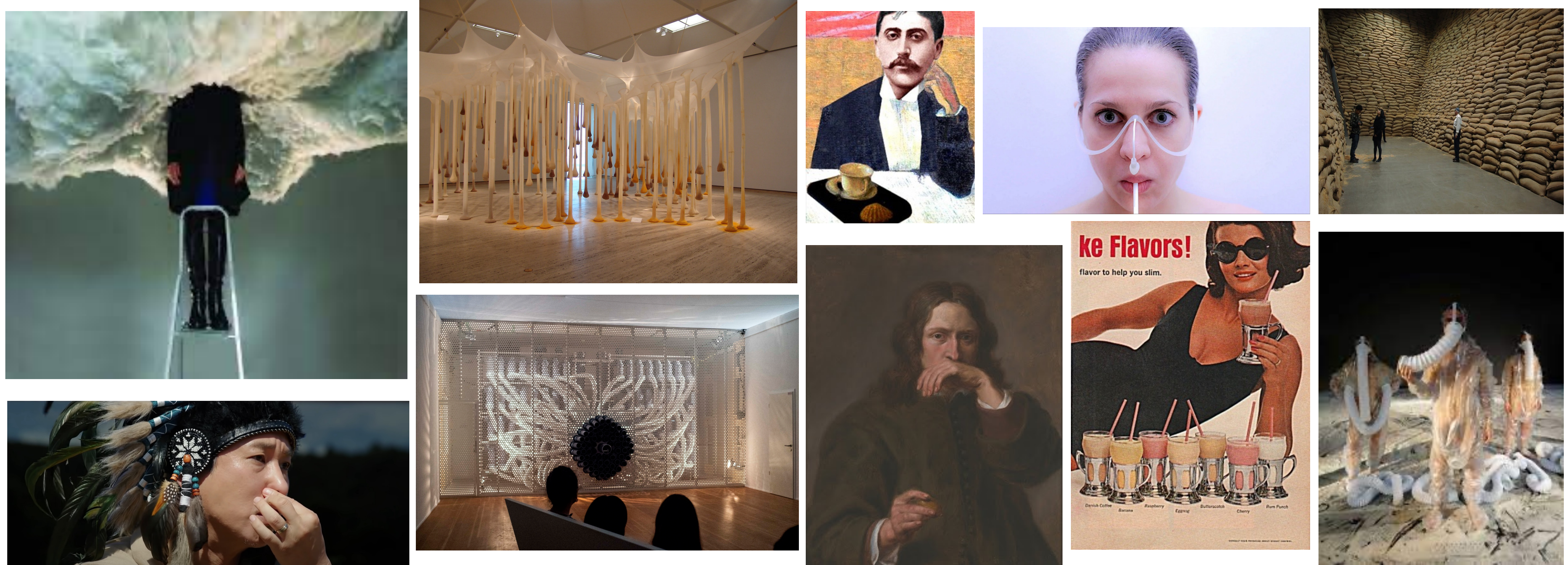
(Eugène Minkowski, James J. Gibson, Hubertus Tellenbach)

ART/PERFUMERY/ART CRITIQUE/LITERATURE

(David Edwards, Futurists, Perer De Cupere, Wolfgang Georgsdorf, Jim Drobnick, Chantal Jaquet, Italo Calvino)

CASE-STUDIES

- **FOOD FLAVOURS AND GENDERED SPACES**
- **SMELL, FOOD AND THE ARTS**
- **AVANT-GARDIST GASTRONOMIES AND THE NOSE**
- **OLFACTORY SOMAESTHETICS IN ITALO CALVINO**
- **POLITICS AND ITS OLFACTORY DEVICES**



EDITORIAL PROJECTS

- **EDIZIONI ETS (SERIES: CIBO, CONOSCENZA, FILOSOFIA), 2022** – published
L'olfattivo. Per un'estetica sociale dell'odorato

- **MIMESIS INTERNATIONAL (SERIES: ATMOSPHERIC SPACES), 2023**
Osmospheres: Smell, Atmosphere, Food

PUBLICATIONS (in progress)

- **JOURNAL (2022); *ESPES. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics***
“Osmospheric Dwelling: Smell, Food, Gender and Atmospheres” (accepted)

- **EDITED COLLECTION (2023); *Food and Somaesthetics***
“Food Osmospheres: Olfactory Somaesthetics in Italo Calvino” (in review)

CONFERENCES (in progress)

- **UNIVERSITÀ DI PARMA (17-18 October 2022)**
Pensare la discontinuità: Le scienze umanistiche e sociali di fronte al riscaldamento globale e alla crisi ecologica
“Discontinuità olfattiva: Estetiche dell'abitare l'aria (nell'epoca della crisi climatico-atmosferica e della pandemia)”