

Beyond the Visible: A Phenomenology of Food Pornography.

Special Session 4

Foodscales Beyond the Alternative/Conventional Food Networks Binary

Fransisca Tan
c/o University of Vienna, Austria
fransisca.hok-eng.tan@univie.ac.at

We feel caught as our gaze allures into the dark smooth ganache glazing, topped with a candied clementine, eyeing back at us from a high gloss magazine. And even if such food visuals appear polished and »fake«, they draw us into their world of the gorgeous and divine. The range of elicited feelings is broad, somewhere on the continuum: inspiration and betrayal. Diaconu (2006) asserted, »If vision empowers knowledge, it also impoverishes sensory diversity and makes reality feel less real«. Is this the breaking point to betrayal? Does so-called *food pornography* make »reality feel less real« and prompt the notion of »fake« upon it? Or what is it that makes such experience seem *pornographic*?

The traditional approach of defining what *food porn* is, likely confines to representation and consumption. However, to reveal novel nuances of food studies, we need to move beyond the eye of the conventional beholder. Subsequently, this empirical phenomenological research contrasts a shift of perspective on *how* disputed food visuals are *produced*, by investigating the pristine inner experience of a food artist. The *descriptive experience sampling* method is hereby used to *deconstruct* conceptions surrounding food. Through highlighting the *way* a rumored *producer* of food porn experiences his daily life and the artistic process we emphasize the *structure* of consciousness (i.e. perceptions, emotions, imagery) that constitutes his interaction with the world. Disclosing this perspective, may cause to reconsider calling food visuals »fake« or »less real« and ultimately, allows critical rethinking of a food metaphysics and epistemology in general.

Reference:

Diaconu, M. (2006). Reflections on an aesthetics of touch, smell and taste. *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 4.