

# **Degrowth Degustation**

**Notes of a food  
journey [from]  
London [to] Oslo  
[via] Paris**

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Les Halles, Leon Augustin Lhermitte, 1895

# Introduction—the forensics of food

Lola Lozano

Londonon, a collective of six individual architectural practices, travelled to Paris in February 2019, embarking on a field trip to celebrate, observe, investigate, catalogue and question humanity's relationship with food. Our contribution to Oslo Architecture Triennale reflects on this trip, taking a detailed look at the remarkable impact that the lifecycle of food has on the shaping of our culture, geography and the urban grain of cities worldwide. We have used Paris as a paradigmatic case study of a city with a unique role in world gastronomy that has food engrained at the very core of its being. The ambition of our study is to exhibit a forensic understanding of food production, distribution, preparation, consumption and waste by displaying the mapping of our own shared experience of the Parisian dinner table through mixed media.

A symbolic re-creation of the 'Parisian Dinner Table' presents facts, statistics, anecdotes and stories discovered throughout our Paris expedition and further explored in our London home. Our table is an invitation to celebrate the conviviality inherent in the sharing of food and to reflect upon the connections, human and environmental, that stem from food and our fundamental need to eat.

# **Notes from London [Part 1]**

**July 2017**  
**—**

**September  
2019**



# Londonon—an open letter

Londonon, July 2017

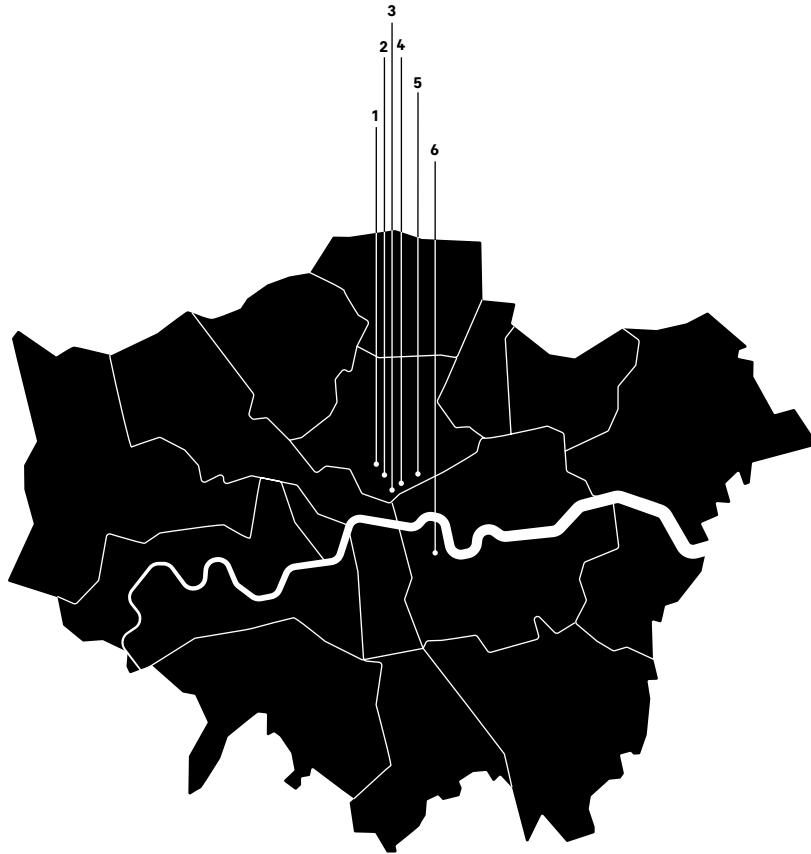
An open letter to architects and other creative  
Following the prime minister's triggering of Article 50, today we officially launch Londonon and an open call for interest from London based architects and creatives as a direct response to the government's challenge to explore global opportunity.

It is undeniable that we are at a critical juncture in international politics, cultural identity and urban development. However, as creatives based in one of the most intense and thriving international cities, we are in a unique position. We can, and must, look outward to learn from others and share our own stories as well.

Londonon is a rolling research and residency programme in cities around the globe run by collaborating London-based architects and creatives. We pool resources, question, collaborate, make and experience, to broaden our minds, expand our reach and widen our worldview.

Londonon is conceived as a filter for ambitious, small to medium-sized creative practices, through a non-profit organisational structure. We desire to learn about our host city, our own conditions in London, and ourselves in a global situation.

The programme will follow the outlined Brexit timetable, starting with a period of planning and research, followed by a recurring three-month placement for select individuals from involved organisations. Team members will work alongside local practices, cultural



## Londonon practices

- 1 Mae
- 2 Haptic Architects
- 3 Coffey Architects
- 4 Morris+Company
- 5 Turner Works
- 6 Gort Scott

and education bodies, government agencies and other invested stakeholders to respond to shared urban challenges. At the end of 24 months, when Ms May's negotiation period expires, we will host an exhibition of our findings.

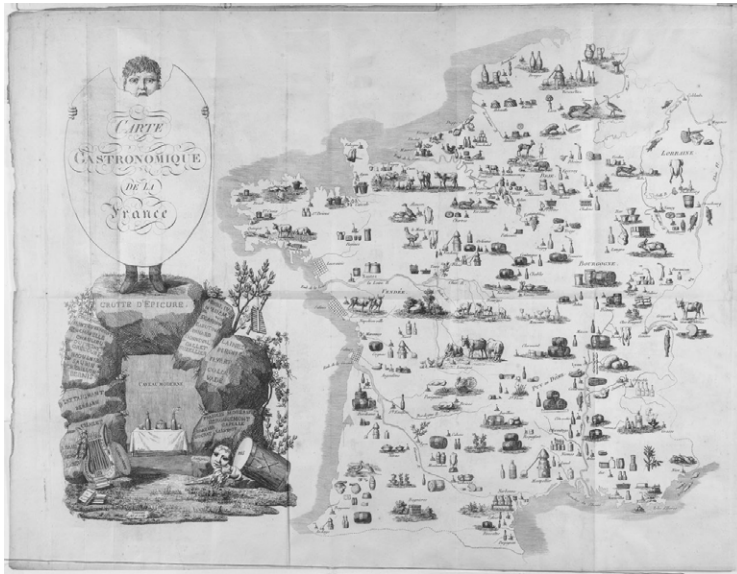
Londonon was soft launched at the Department of International Trade pavilion at MIPIM 2017 by way of a roundtable debate with representatives of the Londonon programme along with industry representatives from the architectural profession, the UK Department of International Trade and members of the UK press. We are now inviting likeminded professionals to take back control of our own aspirations, ambitions and ultimately creative processes.

Londonon is set to express our capital's strengths. We are adaptive, light footed, rich, intensive, open minded, understanding, welcoming. Most importantly, we will express the optimistic entrepreneurial spirit this city reinforces in each of us.

Come and join our conversation.  
Londonon—— [interest@londonon.global](mailto:interest@londonon.global)



**Londonon team photo, 2017**



La carte gastronomique de la France, Jean-François Tourcaty

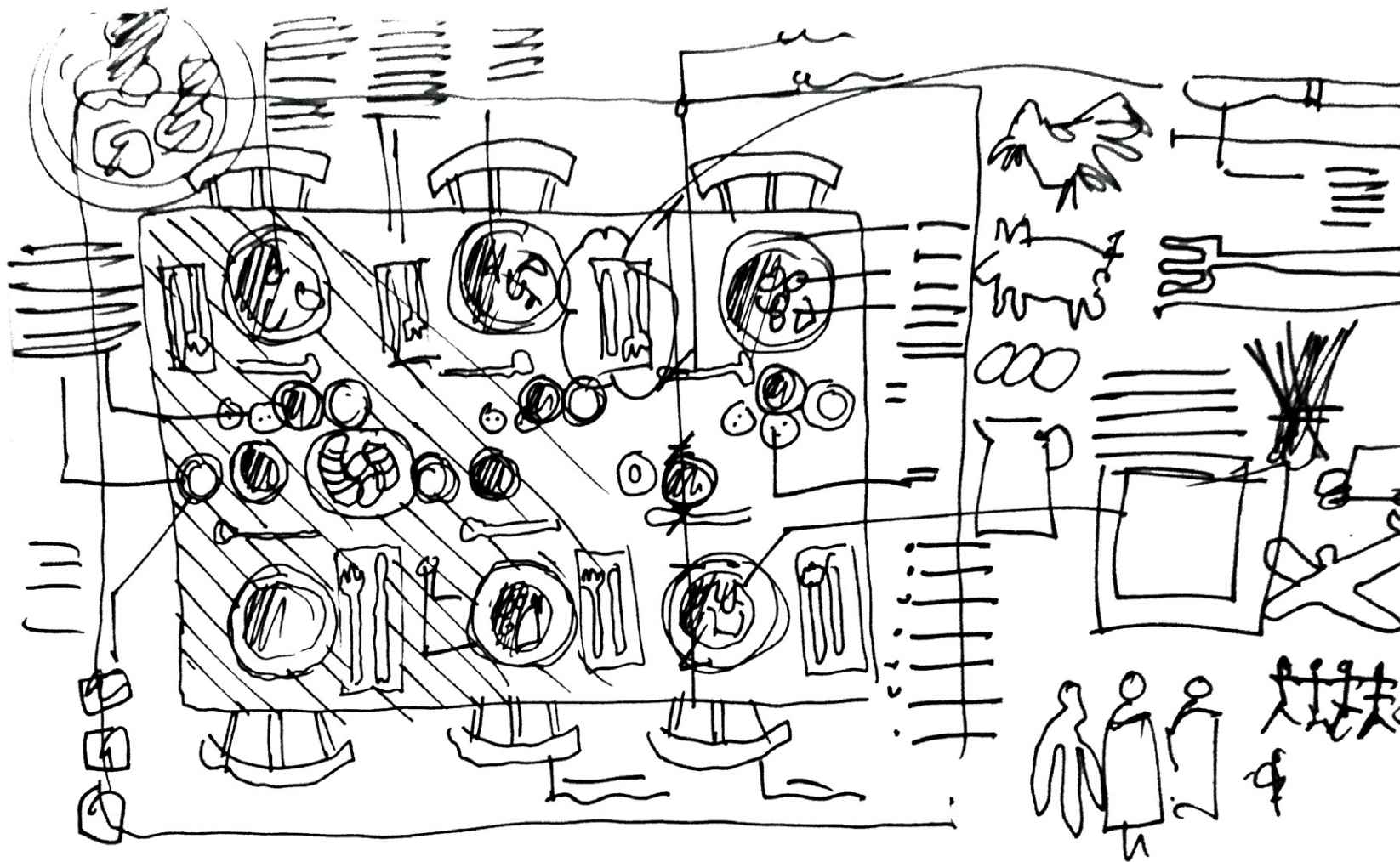
# Londonon Paris brief— programme précis

Joe Morris

Paris has played a unique role in world gastronomy, influencing cooks and gourmets across the world. It has served as a focal point not only for its own cuisine, but for regional specialties from across France. For tourists, its food remains one of the great attractions of the city itself. Paris, then, is a city in which the preparation and consumption of food sits at the very core of its being.

It is well recorded in many international journals and through extensive research that the industrialised food industry, which includes large scale intensive factory farming and animal husbandry is one of the leading causes of environmental damage. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] estimates that livestock production accounts for about 14.5 percent of all human-caused emissions, or about 7.1 gigatons of carbon dioxide or its warming equivalent.

As a consequence, during the course of a week, Londonon will take a detailed look at the impact that the life cycle of food has had on the shaping of the culture, geography and urban grain of Paris. We will reflect upon how each of the key stages of the food cycle [production, distribution, preparation, consumption, waste] has physically and culturally influenced the city. Our five day working field trip will visit predefined parts of the city with a view to observing and cataloguing our findings of each food stage and to map the immediate locale. This



Londonon Paris brief as a napkin sketch, Joe Morris

mapping will include sound and video recordings, drawings and sketches, photography and collected artefacts and objects. It will also include interviews with locals as we strive to obtain insight into the human and socio-cultural background and rhythm of everyday life. In addition to the 'macro' mapping, the six researchers from London [one from each practice] and two collaborating practitioners in Paris, will engage in a mapping exercise in the 'micro' through a plate of food eaten in a restaurant in one of the five destinations described above. The ambition in this exercise is to expand our forensic and detailed understanding of what goes into food production. One plate of simple food, something quintessentially Parisian will be selected and will be dissected through acute observation. We will physically survey the table at 1:1.

This will also define the immediate context of the plate of food. We will measure every plate, fork, spoon, napkin, chair, light, painting, and consumable on the table in section and plan in sufficient detail to enable it to be reproduced in London. We will then survey the food. We will deconstruct the food into ingredients and map the journey of each to identity of origins in order to map the geography of the plate. We will ascertain through statistics and research the mileage, carbon footprint, land use, water use, chemical use and so forth of each ingredient. We will speculate on the number of people involved, for how long, and what they were required to do to cultivate the ingredient. This will therefore constitute our research all of 'production' and 'consumption'.

On the reverse, we will be endeavouring to unveil the counter story of 'waste'. Through the lens of the same plate of food we will record, map and speculate on the

'damage' the same plate of food causes. We will record and map the journey of the packaging, the chemicals used, the landscape scarred by the production of the same. We will follow the journey of the left overs, and scraps to their resting place and draw similar conclusions. This analysis will be annotated over the second physical survey, which is that of the finished meal. Again, we will accurately draw every spoon, napkin, plate, and so forth including scraps and crumbs for reproduction in a corresponding mirror image of the first survey. Our ambition is to fully expose the extent of energy and resource needed to produce just one plate of food as a means to demonstrate the sheer unimaginable magnitude of energy and waste involved in feeding the contemporary city. This proposal will be a real time commentary on the theme of Degrowth.



# Statement on degrowth #1

Alex Ely

As cities prosper economically so too traditionally has architecture, reflecting the adage 'form follows finance'. But our presumptions in favour of economic growth are changing as evidence shows that rapid growth often leads to a widening of inequality and as humanity devours our planet in increasingly destructive volumes. In order to maintain our current appetite for resources, we would need the equivalent of 1.7 Earths.

Our historic relationship to our common pool of resources has led to a 'free-riding' mindset with no incentive to conserve. The tragedy of the commons demands new ideas about managing our resources and new ideas about measuring value.

New Zealand's switch from pursuing growth of gross domestic product to prioritising a national rate of wellbeing—offers a fresh perspective on how we can measure success. Meanwhile campaigns like Extinction Rebellion shine a spotlight on our global climate and ecological emergency and the role a citizen's assembly could have—alongside government—to bring people together to learn, deliberate and make recommendations on an issue of public concern.

How do we reverse the exploitation of our common pool of resources? How do we make architecture with less and is degrowth the answer. What would that mean for the built environment?

Londonon has explored themes of urban intensification counter balanced with an understanding

of the land needed to support our population's needs. We've examined how we can use less land to build, exploring how more uses can be combined in buildings to reduce volume of built form to accommodate our needs [Londonon Milan] and how we can find synergies with nature and buildings in their planning and form of construction and adaptation to climate [Londonon Oslo]. Countering this we have observed the sheer volume of land needed for the production of Europe's vegetables [Londonon El Ejido] and the carbon impact of translating this to a bowl of onion soup [Londonon Paris]. It has helped us think about our role as designers and responsibility to civic society and how individual lifestyle change is needed so we all play our part in reducing use of resources. Londonon will continue to enquire and to engage, the partners will collaborate and debate so we can learn from other cities about how to build resilience and better plan for the future. And we will question how we can better measure value and weigh up presumptions in favour of economic growth versus social or environmental benefit.

Alex Ely, Founding Director Mæ

# **Notes from Paris**

## **February 2019**



# Six architectes gourmands à Paris

Sunday 24 February 2019—Friday 1 March 2019

## From left to right

- Joe Ridealgh [Haptic Architects]
- Hanna Albrecht [Mae]
- Amy Young [Coffey Architects]
- Pamela Snow [Gort Scott]
- Kieren Wells [Morris+Company]
- Michele Rorato [Turner Works]
- Erica Rorato



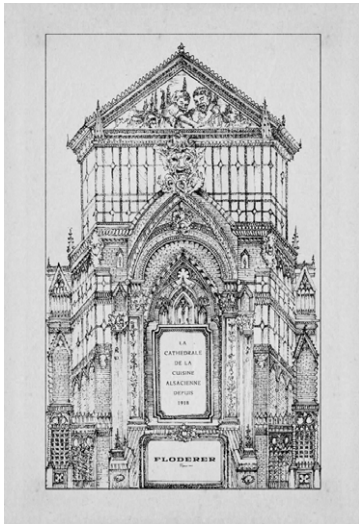
Londonon Paris participants in their shared Airbnb

# Consumption

## Dinner at Floderer

Joe Ridealgh

We wanted to get a sense of the Parisian average, a restaurant with a classic French ambience and menu. Low-lit and jazz-filled, Brasserie Floderer, the self-proclaimed 'cathedral of Alsatian cuisine' seemed like the perfect setting for a bowl of onion soup. The restaurant has served traditional French dishes for at least 100 years and was very accommodating of our questions and mapping exercises. Each of us took a different dish from the menu, thinking about the complexity of each dish and speculating on where the ingredients may have come from, meat dishes being particularly scrutinised. We considered the cultural importance and impact of each item on the plate and whether every ingredient was essential—can the locally caught oyster be enjoyed without the lemons that are flown over from Sicily? This initial act of 'consumption' formed the basis of our exploration of the significance of food culture in Paris and its social, environmental and economic impacts.



Dinner at Floderer



FLODERER <i>Déjeuner 1917</i>			
OYSTERS			
<i>(Les oysters de France et d'Angleterre, crues, pour de suite et heures deux sets)</i>			
Belonnières « Gachet » N° 4	1	11,00	18,50 22,00
<i>Finest, American oyster</i>			
Spéciales « Gachet » N° 3	1	16,00	18,50 22,00
<i>Les plus et exquis</i>			
Fines de Claire « Pateck » N° 2	1	20,20	18,50 45,00
Fines de Claire « Pateck » N° 3	1	18,00	17,50 35,00
SHELLFISH AND CRUSTACEANS			
<i>(Assortiment de crustacés, crues, pour de suite et heures deux sets)</i>			
Amandes (les 6)	1	4,50	
Demi-Tourteau / Tourteau Entier	1	8,50 / 15,50	
Bakos (cra. 200 gr)	1	10,50	
Crevettes Grises (cra. 150 gr)	1	10,50	
Crevettes Roses (cra. 120 gr)	1	12,50	
Demi-Homard / Homard entier	1	27,50 / 48,00	
Langoustines (6 Pieces)	1	16,50	
STARTERS			
Salmon and Scallops Tartar, Sauce Sauté with Hussels	1	16,50	
Butternut Soup with Curry, Raisins de France	1	6,50	
6 or 12 Big Burgundy Soups, Assorted with Chablis	1	18,00 / 17,00	
Traditional Browned Onion Soup	1	7,50	
Half cooked Duck Liver, For Hot Jelly and Sautéed Bread	1	15,00	
Hot Smoked Salmon, Bone	1	18,00	
Meat Pie with Dried Fruits, Pickle of Butters	1	6,50	
Hard Boiled Egg with Grubbe Sauce (Lentil) and Smoked Haddock	1	7,50	
Smoked Haddock with Chicory Salad, Hot Cream and Potatoes	1	11,50	
Fried Duck Liver, Hot Sauce, Sauté with Potatoes	1	16,50	
Cooly Lettuce with Bacon and Croutons, Poached Egg	1	11,50	
VEGETARIAN DISHES			
Vegetables Platter	1	17,00	
<i>Chicory Potatoes, Eggs and Curry on Grains, Macaroni Potatoes, Pick Chai Cabbage</i>			
Risotto Carnaroli, Bro with Mushrooms	1	17,50	
<i>Plus de menus sur demande</i>			

Floderer menu



Place setting

# Surveying the dinner table

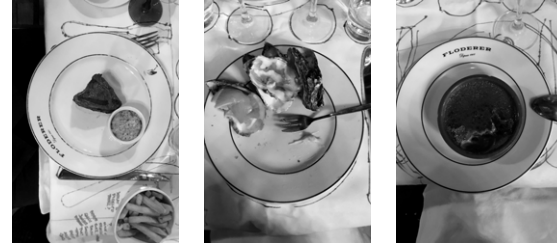
Joe Ridealgh



Surveying the dinner table

Through surveying our meal with an analytical eye, we began to engage with our food on another sensory level, understanding what individual components created this singular experience. Dinner eaten at a table is a highly cultural phenomenon, yet the act of sharing food is global. Carolyn Steel comments on the changes in western society from this shared dining experience to fast food and the TV dinner, something I am personally very familiar with. However, our meal was distinctly different to a conventional restaurant experience,

despite the setting being chosen for its particularly classic Parisian ambience and menu. We arrived with a number of noticeably large camera, tripods and microphones, and a bag of felt-tip pens. We were there to record the meal.



Process

Through each course we traced in pen every item that was brought to the table, what was consumed, what was shared around and the tools by which we consumed. Each course was a layer in a different colour, the cloth quickly becoming a chaotic map of the clattering process of sharing food, with all its spills and messiness. We photographed our surroundings in detail and even made note of the music playing [an unassuming youtube compilation of the best French restaurant jazz].

The resultant object—the tablecloth—captured the energy of the process whilst providing insights into the conversations shared in each area of the table. We see the zone of shared objects down the centre of the table and notice the essential and forgotten, the individual and the collective. This process in itself was enough of a vehicle to begin discussion of the topic.



# Disposal

## Zero waste ambitions— Paris 10ième arrondissement

Hanna Albrecht

In December 2017 the 10th arrondissement of Paris started the challenging experimental project of a zero waste street. They chose the popular, multicultural, but heavily polluted street 'Rue de Paradis' in the heart of the quarter. Responding to the urgency of climate change, whilst strengthening the social life within the neighbourhood, an agenda was developed in cooperation with residents, restaurants and supermarkets. The main objective is to reduce waste, which would then lead to a decrease in refuse collection, and in turn reduce vehicle exhaust which has one of the biggest impacts on our environmental pollution. The first hurdle that the initiative wants to overcome is a rubbish reduction of 10 % by the end of 2020. In order to reach that target supermarkets must start to sell products without plastic packaging, restaurants must distribute lunches in reusable boxes and residents must separate and compost organic food waste. In parallel to reducing waste within Paris, citizens should have greater awareness of their consumption day to day by taking on the 5R Mantra:

Refuse—Reduce—Reuse—Recycle—Return



Rue du Paradis, Paris

# Production [in the city]

## L'Agrocité Gennevilliers

Hanna Albrecht

L'Agrocité Gennevilliers is one result of the bottom-up strategy R-Urban initiated by the architecture collective L'Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée. Their idea is to set up a network of resident-run facilities to promote alternative models of living, to acquire knowledge about producing and consuming, and to generate a balance between the urban and the rural. Accompanied by cultural and educational activities.

The driving force for the whole initiative is to avert the current environmental crisis with regards to climate, resources, economy and demographic change. L'Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée suggests, like the philosopher, Andre Gorz, to 'produce what we consume and consume what we produce'.

Utilising a derelict car park in the Gennevilliers neighbourhood, the L'Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée team transformed an unloved space. In April 2018 with the help of citizen participation the design team sourced recyclable materials to build a large communal garden, including 48 vegetable patches and a lodge with a proper equipped kitchen and a dining/meeting room. Those patches can be rented for individual cultivation while the garden is accessible for the whole neighbourhood. Residents have the possibility to meet their friends, to tinker around the house, to debate and learn about environmental protection and local sustainable sourcing, to garden, to cook and to eat their harvested products together.





**Views of the Agrocité, Paris**



# Transportation and trade [in the city]

## History—Les Halles

Thomas Leung



**Les Halles de Paris, 1863**

Les Halles was a focus of attention of food transportation and distribution in the city of Paris from 1183 to 1969. A bustling central food market, it was a focal point for working class Parisian life. Underneath the monumental glass and iron arched pavilions designed by Victor Baltard [architect of Musée d'Orsay] in 1870, lay a labyrinth of stalls selling fresh fish, meat, vegetables and other goods. Immortalised in Émile Zola's novel *La Ventre de Paris*, this was 'The Belly of Paris', the place to feed a city.

Directly in the centre of Paris, just North of the Seine, Les Halles was a gathering place for the citizens of Paris. Locals, farmers, fishermen and butchers mingled in what was a social and commercial centrepiece for the city. In the daytime pallets of vegetables were flogged, while at night, the market came alive for meat and fish sellers.



Les Halles de Paris, 1950



**Les Halles de Paris, 1950**

It was an inspiration for artists, highlighted by the story of Greek painter Nonda. In the 1950s, he sought to capture the raucous nature of Les Halles. In the small hours of the morning, he would be seen on his knees painting the night-time trade with ox blood and charcoal, in what became known as his 'Sanguine' series. Conventional painting materials were scarce at the time, and Nonda's experiments were made possible by the generosity of local butchers and fishmongers, who were surely amused watching their waste turned to canvas.

Sadly, the status of Les Halles as an institution of Paris would not last. The popularity of the market increased traffic congestion and led to buildings of the quarter becoming increasingly rundown. Strategies were made to shift the wholesale marketplace out of the city centre to Rungis and the neighbourhood was designated for renewal [although bitter debate occurred over how this was to be carried out]. When Baltard's twelve pavilions were razed in 1971, it left a gargantuan hole in the ground, a symbol to many Parisians of a last bastion of the 'fin de siècle' being torn down.

Today, Les Halles is home to a large underground shopping mall and one of the city's busiest metro stations. Attempts to regenerate the area have generalised Les Halles into yet another multiplex, for consumers to waste away the hours. What was once a unique, mythical fresh food market which held the appetites of a city has since faded away.

# Today—Rungis

Dorota Glab

Around midnight, as most Parisians head to sleep, a parallel universe comes to life inside a giant food market. Covering 232 hectares—an area larger than Monaco—Rungis is the world's biggest wholesale food market.

Many of the traders are second or third generation of those who were around during the times of Les Halles, an iconic market of Paris which was a predecessor of Rungis. At only 16 hectares Les Halles gradually outgrew its location and had to be relocated to allow for its further expansion.

Its main feature is more than 30 refrigerated pavilions, some of them the length of a football field. With a structure comparable to a self-contained city, it also has 19 restaurants, a bank, a post office, a hotel, several gas stations and the market's own police force.

Rungis market feeds one out of five Frenchmen, and for the greater Paris region it supplies:

- 50% of seafood
- 45% of fruit and vegetables
- 35% of meat products

Every working day starts with 13,000 workers preparing the market stands to trade with customers representing many French businesses, including some of the finest restaurants, independent retailers and especially, vendors reselling at the many open markets in Paris. It is much more than a wholesale market for Parisian restaurateurs. Traders from all over Europe come to buy and sell produce at Rungis.



Rungis 'Internationale'

26,000 vehicles enter every day and 1,698,000 tons of fresh food are brought in annually from all over the world. This fresh food is served the next day in Paris restaurants. The magnificent variety of produce including: beautifully arranged fruit and vegetables, aromatic flowers, fresh seafood, over 400 types of cheese, wine, processed and fresh meat, freshly slaughtered turkeys, pigeons, grouse, and wild rabbits, all of it artfully presented for a visual appeal; can be truly inspiring to all. This market is a go to place for any produce that a chef could ever need.

While most tourists have never heard of it—for the culinary professional or food enthusiast, Rungis offers crucial and revealing insight. Although, one must brave the early morning hours and the icy indoor temperatures in some of the pavilions, visiting Rungis is an essential trip to truly appreciate the culinary marvel of Paris, as Rungis is the place where the finest of French cuisine begins.



**Rungis produce**



**Rungis café**

# Preparation

## La Trochette restaurant

Joe Ridealgh

In France, 10 million tonnes of consumable food is thrown away every year. La Trochette is a café that tries to address this problem, showing its patrons that what is being thrown away as 'waste' is in fact a usable resource and that waste food can be turned into a delicious meal.



**Les dames de la Trochette, Joe Ridealgh**

We came across the café after a conversation at an organic vegetable market on the edge of the 11th arrondissement. The market is just one part of a wider network of the Paris food cycle. Unlike most of the markets in Paris, that are served by the huge distribution centre Rungis, the market buys produce direct from the



farmers, whilst retaining a similarly close relationship with the restaurants, cafes and consumers. The fruit and vegetables that go unsold at food markets are often thrown away. But in the case of La Trocette, the food waste from the market is packed onto a bicycle and taken to the café, where it is used to provide a set three course lunch every day for around 50 people.

In the morning, the chef is presented with the market's unwanted vegetables, and sets about creating a menu for that day based on the resources she is given. The menu changes frequently depending on what food is in season and is surplus.

On our visit, the 'Menu du Jour' read:

- cress soup
- leek tart
- apple crumble

The café organisation hopes to promote cooperation between market stalls, shops, cafes and restaurants to ensure that no food goes to waste at any part of the cycle. La Trocette disseminate information to the public about the precise impact of re-engaging with food waste, systematically coupling the concrete actions of the café with the dissemination of educational messages.



# Towards degrowth

## The traceable meal

Timothée Gauvin, Saba Ghorbanalinejad

What were this? Non-primary materials, ~~an architect's~~ a chef's journey.

Let's take food as a potential analogy with architecture and not mention architecture any further. As an exercise, we looked closely at the making of ~~a building~~ an onion soup. Beautifully assembled, it was at first a perfectly coherent object. It expresses the simple fact of being ~~a building~~ a soup. Brought to us as a finished product, it does not tell more about the many ways it could have been made. Before it was put on ~~the site~~ the table, a narrative bomb is hidden. Hypnotized by the abstract beauty of this gift, we do not pay attention to details, enjoying the beauty of ease, with ease.

Behind those doors, there is the story of ~~builders~~ of cooks. They have a nice story to tell that we are keen to forget. Moments ago, ~~the building~~ the soup was not. A population of elements, were stored next to each other instead, telling each other their own individual story, waiting to be assembled. ~~The architect~~, the chef had ~~a plan~~ a recipe, and he has assembled them rigorously following it, using various tools in order to give them shape. However, he did not bring them himself to his kitchen.

In the morning, daily deliveries organized in order to have sufficient material to work for the day arrived at the door of ~~the construction site~~ the restaurant. ~~The architect~~ The chef had worked on a list of all the materials he needed to build ~~his project~~ his menu. He has faced an

infinity of choices. Every style, every colour, every taste, was feasible without any barrier. Almost every product is available in a range of prices, thanks to a growing and competitive global economy. Basically, everything that he could think of was available... by a click.

Not that he did not like the idea, but ~~the architect~~ the chef felt a bit lost with all the choices. And not only the possibilities were infinite, but for each of these possibilities, a number of competitive suppliers would make the choice even harder. Let us take ~~the brick~~ the onion, for example, which was supposed to be one fundamental element to build ~~any wall~~ any meal. Dozens of different suppliers would show up, among them mixed producers and resellers, which are actually difficult to differentiate.

Frustrated by the complexity to make a simple choice, he decided to build his own body of resources, not by making the products himself but by getting closer to the resource that he was looking for. This attitude naturally led him towards nearby producers, whose entire process is reduced to extraction-fabrication-delivery. He went to meet them and learnt from them. By being able to visit them, he was able to trace the entire life of one single product and learnt about what makes quality, cost, and time management, which conducted the reasons of his choice.

The project of making an onion soup, as simple as it could appear, reveals tons of potential actors, choices, and impacts. The cost, taste, and environmental impact of two very similar onion soups can therefore be drastically different depending on the choices of the person who specifies the products it is made of. Despite the fact that many ingredients are easily reachable in

a close perimeter, if he is limited by numbers, the chef will put his creativity to the benefit of variety and so will the architect.

# An afternoon with Augustin Rosenstiehl

David Deroo

Paris' agriculture landscape has been reimagined in the book 'Capital Agricole' by Augustin Rosenstiehl [SOA Architects]; seeking to remedy the environmental crisis caused by urban sprawl and aggressively expanding cities. The future of Paris as an agriculture hub should take inspiration from its past. The city is steeped in agricultural heritage, the late nineteenth century demonstrating the interdependence of city, nature and agriculture as 'specialist' farmers would often trade within the city, inventing crops while protecting their local environments. It is through revealing the links between these forces that Capital Agricole opens a window for how a new agricultural urbanism can be created.



London participants in conversation with Augustin Rosenstiehl

A future which does not oppose the city and countryside coexisting.

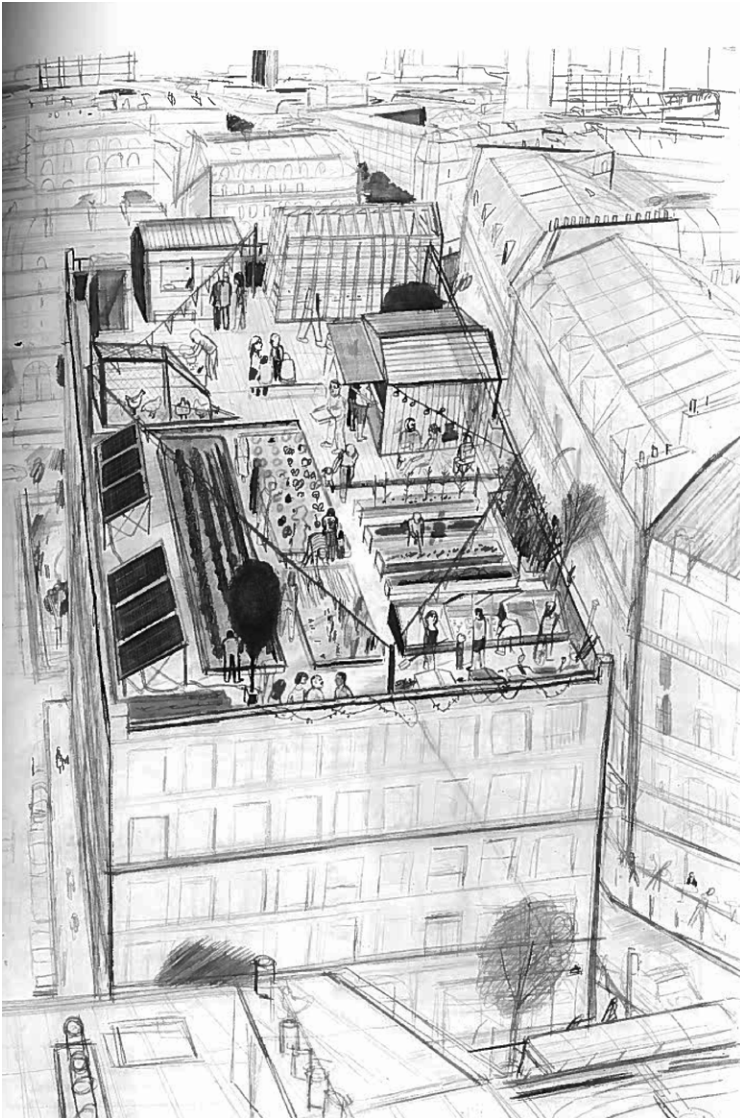
Augustin, supported by geographers, architects, and urbanists, envisions Paris as a powerful agriculture hub. The idea of transforming dense urban landscape into a new agriculture entity is in total opposition to urban planning policies put in place since the end of the second world war. The effects on the present day are clear as dramatically segregated urban space and farmland has led to the slow disappearance of allotments and farmer's markets in the heart of cities such as Paris.

Reintroducing growing environments through a 'green revolution.'

Strategies depicted in the book describe using every bit of space with an intention to 'grow' the city and reassess the purpose of disused buildings. Through planting on roofs and in basements, individuals can reclaim their land. Collectively, peri-urban farms, agronomic complexes and foraging parks could be created to invest in changing the dialogue between city dweller and farmer. A green sprawl taking over Paris will bring back nature and food enthusiasm to the heart of the city and combined with trades and tools, to bet on a more sustainable and self-sufficient city.

The market at the centre of social and environmental interaction.

Using this age-old typology as a trigger for this new urban metabolism, the city can be revitalised and make the transition to a new, more efficient era. Getting people involved in the process of food production which



Sketch, Augustin Rosenstiehl

they then consume is a virtuous circle. Everyone involved will understand the importance of the effort each individual can contribute towards building this new, collective agricultural urbanism.

'Capital Agricole' is a fresh view over urban development using known technology to push what we know, to new limits and scale. Paris, once the city of light could become the city of tomorrow.

Is Paris ready for such changes? Are Parisians willing to evolve in that direction? The vision of Augustin and his team help bring these hybrid ideas forward and shift mainstream opinion. By stopping irrational discrete growth—A De-growth model could be within our reach.

# 2

## Statement on degrowth #2

Carl Turner

### Meanwhile is the solution

We have developed a temporary or 'meanwhile' approach to design. This is the interim use of land or buildings for which the long-term plan may not be known. For instance, our competition winning Pop Brixton project has created a mixed-use creative campus in the heart of Brixton with a lifespan approaching five years. Over two hundred jobs have been created on a site of approximately 1500sqm. The project is a joint venture with Lambeth Council who own the land, and Pop Brixton.

We have gone on to convert Peckham's Multi Storey Car Park into 8000sqm of creative workspaces, maker spaces, event spaces, dance and music rehearsal rooms, bars, and cafes.

What both projects have in common is a lifespan that would normally be considered far too short to be viable, but we believe we have an evolving model that can unlock both the short, and long-term potential of under-utilised sites.

We believe that the *push effect* of standard development models is exacerbating the 'gentrification' of successful cities around the world.

We propose the PULL effect as a possible solution:  
P/U/L/L [Populate/Unlock/Learn/Legacy]

### Populate

Deploy temporary structures [or occupy an existing building] and create spaces tailored to local needs. What's missing in an area can only be understood by inviting people to come forward and co-create a place. The 'architecture' needs to be loose fit to accommodate change. This process allows us to engage with people through the act of doing rather than talking.

### Unlock

We have found it important to create a supportive environment with a proportion spaces at supported rent levels. This is about unlocking the potential of a place by unlocking the potential of local people. Literally pulling people with us. It's about creating a stepping-stone economy.

### Learn

The resultant spread of uses will grow organically and become a testbed, informing the potential future of the site. It's important to learn from the successes and failures in order that the legacy holds the promise of the transient.

### Legacy

We believe this allows for an evolution of place, through the act of meaningful and productive engagement; a dialogue about how neighbourhoods can change. The meanwhile project can thus be thought to incubate, inspire and inform people, businesses, communities and activities that are then capable of plugging into a longer-term proposal. These projects demonstrate our commitment to reuse, reduce, recycle.

Carl Turner, Director of Turner Works & Co-founder  
of Pop Brixton & Peckham Levels

# From macro to micro—— a forensic analysis of onion soup

## L'histoire de la soupe à l'oignon

Hélène Solvay



### La soupe aux halles

One of the first mentions of 'soupe à l'oignon' appears in Nicolas Appert's manual entitled:

*L'Art de Conserver pendant plusieurs années toutes les substances animales et végétales.*

[The art of storing for several years, all animal and vegetable substances] Nicolas Appert describes the legend of the 'soupe à l'oignon soup à la Stanislas'

The Duke of Lorraine, ex-King of Poland Stanislas Leszczynski, stopped in on his way to the Palace of Versailles to visit his daughter Queen Marie, the wife

of Louis XV, in an inn in Châlons-en-Champagne. The Duke tasted the soup for dinner found the soup prepared for him so mind-blowingly delightful that he was compelled to leave his chambers in his bathrobe, descend to the kitchen, and fight through stinging tears while watching the chef dice dozens of onions and learning the exact recipe.

In his introduction to the art of conservation, Appert describes the magic of heat and fire—[la chaleur-le feu] in transforming food substances—particularly in the context of food conservation. An example of this can be read in his recipe for 'soupe a l'oignon':

*Slice the top crust from a loaf of bread, break into pieces and bring close to the fire on each side. When the crusts are warm, rub with butter and hold close to the fire until they are slightly toasted, they can then be placed on a plate whilst the onions are fried in butter—three larges ones, cut into small cubes and they are left on the fire until they have become a beautiful dark blond colour, so that that are one equal colour, whilst continously mixing.*

*When they are coloured enough, the crusts are added, still tossing the pan until the onions are brown. When they have taken sufficient colour, to take await from the pan, the onion should be wet with a little boiling water and seasoning. This should be left to simmer for a quarter of an hour before serving.*

*It would be wrong to think that by adding stock or consommé to this soup, it would be improved, as this addition would make it too rich [trop nutritive] and would alter its delicate nature.*

# LE LIVRE DE TOUS LES MÉNAGES,

OU

## L'ART DE CONSERVER,

PENDANT PLUSIEURS ANNÉES,

TOUTES LES SUBSTANCES ANIMALES  
ET VÉGÉTALES;

PAR M. APPERT,

Ancien Confiseur et Distillateur, Élève de la bouche de la maison ducal  
de Christian IV, membre de la Société d'Encouragement pour l'industrie  
nationale.

QUATRIÈME ÉDITION,

REVUE ET AUGMENTÉE DE PROCÉDÉS NOUVEAUX, D'EXPÉRIENCES  
ET D'OBSERVATIONS NOUVELLES.

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« J'ai pensé que votre découverte méritait un témoignage  
particulier de la bienveillance du gouvernement. »  
Lettre de S. Exc. le MINISTRE DE L'INTÉRIEUR.

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A PARIS,

CHEZ BARROIS L'AÎNÉ, LIBRAIRE,

RUE DES BEAUX-ARTS, N° 15;

L'AUTEUR, RUE DU PARADIS, N° 16, AU MARAIS.

1831.

Le livre de tout les ménages, ou l'art de conserver  
pendant plusieurs années, Nicolas Appert, 1831



# Recette d'aujourd'hui

Dorota Glab

## Onion soup recipe

4 to 6 servings

### Ingredients

- 6 large yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced root to stem, about 10 cups of sliced onions total
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- Salt
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 cups of beef stock
- ½ cup of dry white wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon [loose] of fresh thyme [can also use a few sprigs of fresh thyme] or ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 slices French bread or baguette cut 1-inch thick
- 1½ cups of grated Swiss Gruyere

### Method

In a large thick-bottomed pot, heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil on medium heat. Add the onions and toss to coat with the olive oil.

Cook the onions, stirring often, until they have softened, about 15 to 20 minutes. Increase the heat to medium high. Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil

and the butter and cook, stirring often, until the onions start to brown, about 15 more minutes.

Then sprinkle with sugar [to help with the caramelization] and 1 teaspoon of salt and continue to cook until the onions are well browned, about 10 to 15 more minutes.

Add the minced garlic and cook for a minute more. Add the wine to the pot and scrape up the browned bits on the bottom and sides of the pot, deglazing the pot as you go. Add the stock, bay leaves, and thyme. Bring to a simmer, cover the pot and lower the heat to maintain a low simmer. Cook for about 30 minutes.

While the soup is simmering, line a sheet pan with parchment paper or foil and preheat the oven to 450°F with a rack in the upper third of the oven.

Brush both sides of the French bread or baguette slices lightly with olive oil. Put in the oven and toast until lightly browned, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from oven.

Turn the toasts over and sprinkle with the grated Gruyere cheese. Return to oven when it's close to serving time and bake until the cheese is bubbly and lightly browned.

To serve, ladle soup into a bowl and transfer one cheesy toast onto the top of each bowl of soup.

# 3

## Statement on degrowth #3

Fiona Scott

Growth has not only a rate [positive or negative] but a direction.

Over the last year at Gort Scott we have been considering London's high streets in detail to understand how they should adapt to future challenges. London's 600-or-so high streets [mixed-use streets] are some of the city's most vibrant and interesting places. Our work recognises how they are fantastically successful for business incubation, established business networks, socialising, supporting diverse communities and participation in cultural and civic life.

The London Mayor supports intensification of high streets and town centres as potentially the most sustainable form of urban living. These are some of the places most deeply affected by new development and urban restructuring. But how can we make change happen on high streets, in a way that can benefit all and responds to some of the most pressing issues of today—climate emergency, inequality, wellbeing and digitalisation?

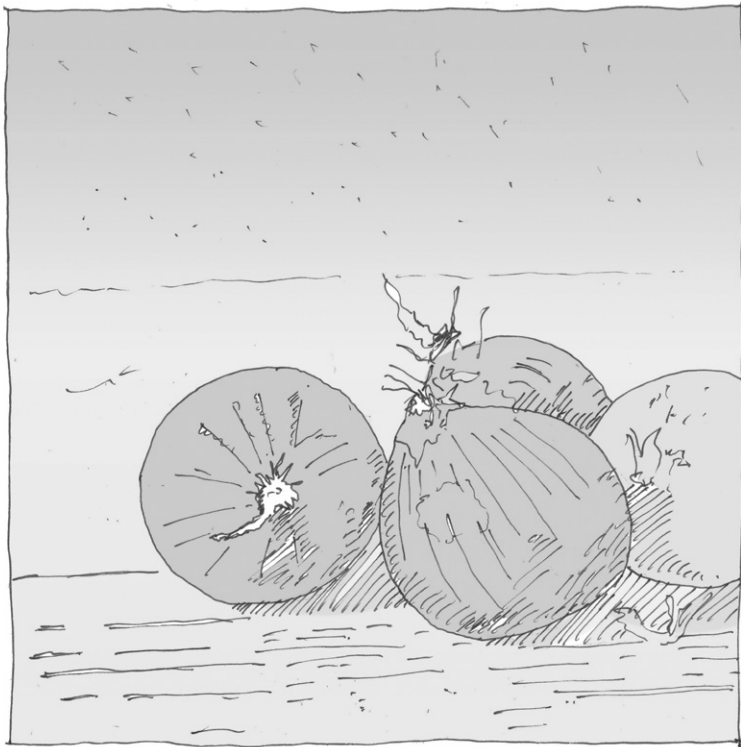
To do so we need to strive for long-term resilience: London needs to invest in structures and systems that support the creation of value that is not just focused on rate of growth alone. Growth itself cannot be indefinitely sustainable. Her Majesty's Treasury [HM Treasury] Green Book provides 'appraisal and evaluation' guidance, which leads to project and development case-making based on increased financial

return and commercial value as measures of success. We need to move away from this to alternate measures that are more relevant to the function and status of high streets—like activity, participation, inclusion, public health, carbon reduction—and the creation of social and environmental value and value in the local economy.

Fiona Scott, Director of Gort Scott

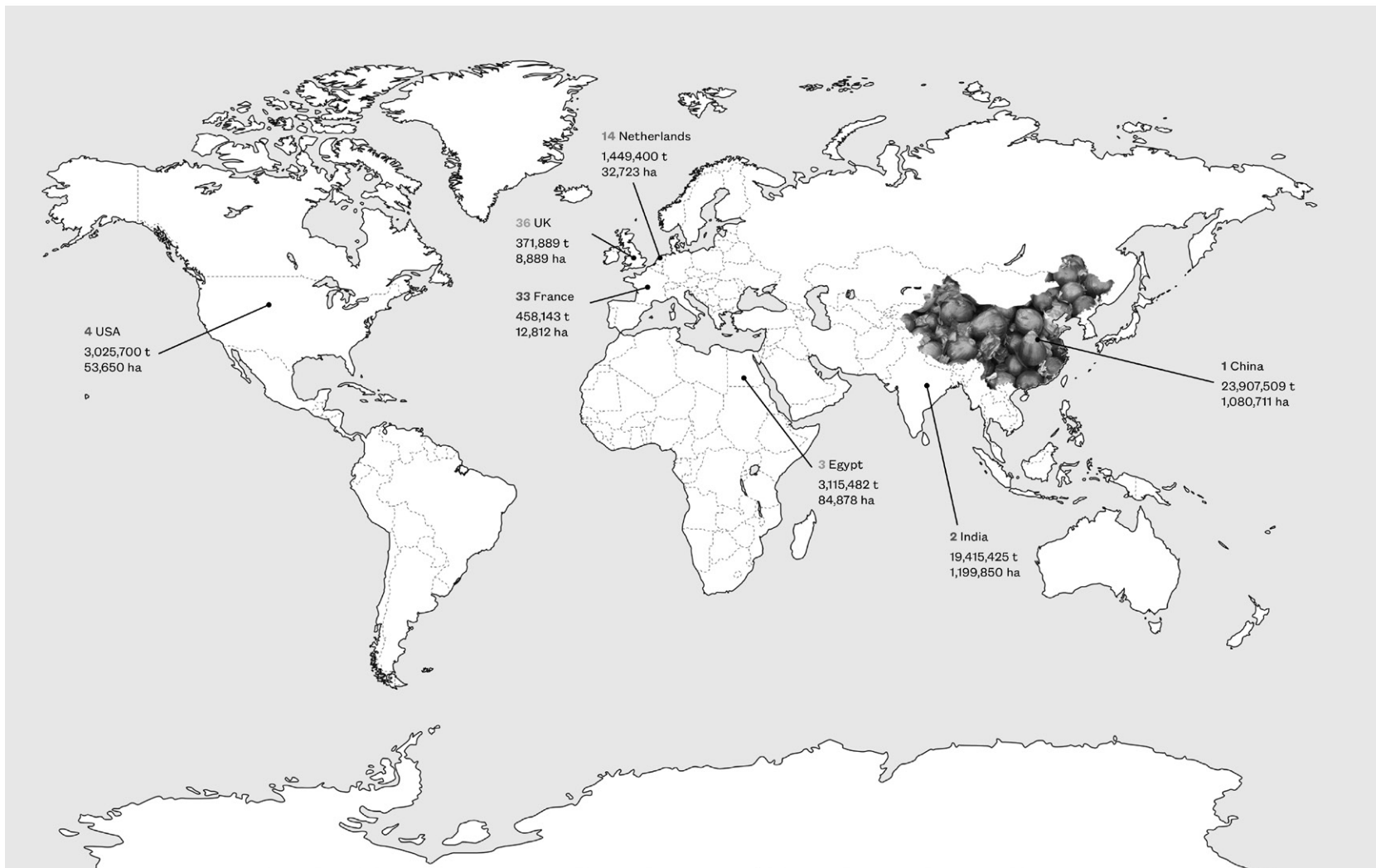
# Ingredients—onions

Hanna Albrecht



Onions, Kieren Wells

ONION—the main ingredient for the French onion soup  
Onions are very much a global food staple and can be expected to be found in more or less any well stocked kitchen. This is in part down to their affordability but perhaps more importantly down to their distinct flavour. They have become key component to many hearty meals. Thus more than 74,250,809 tonnes of onions are consumed world wide per year. The biggest onion producing country is China, followed by India and Egypt. Just in France 458,143 tonnes of onions are harvested every year. This weight corresponds to 2,290 blue whales or 4.5 times the Eiffel Tower. To grow those French onions 12,812 ha of land are needed, a size that is comparable to the dimension of Manchester. On average a French person consumes 3 kg, so around 35 onions per year. To grow those 3 kg, 840 l of water are required. It is the same amount of water that would be used for 13 showers of 5 minutes. While planting, maintaining and harvesting the 3 kg of the vegetable, 0.75 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emission arise, equivalent to a 5 km spin by car. In view of the ongoing environmental debate the idea of local sustainable sourcing needs to be promoted. Already with a vegetable patch of 1 m by 1.2 m enough onions could be planted to cover the consumption of one household. This example illustrates that even a small balcony would provide enough space to start planting fruits and vegetables in order to contribute to a sustainable consumption.



Onion production in the world, Hanna Albrecht

# Ingredients—Oxo cube

Kieren Wells

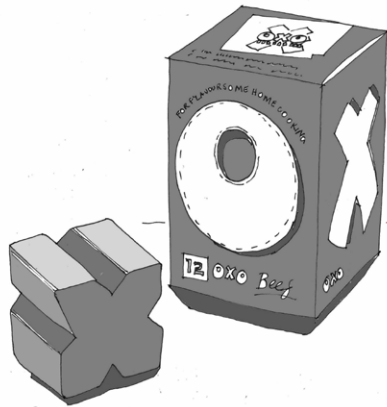
Food shapes us, and in turn we shape food. It defines who we are and how we live, it can bring us together or tear us apart. Food is impossibly complex.

Fond Brun [Brown Stock] is the foundation of soupe a l'oignon. Essentially a soup within a soup utilising beef bones, the origins of which lie with our 'hunter gatherer' ancestors, that was developed out of necessity, and where all parts of the animal were utilised—waste unimaginable.

Based on the premise that we have lost contact with our food, the research sought to investigate the apparent food dysmorphia present in modern day foods. A time where cattle have become cubes, where recipes once celebrated are relegated to the bottom of little red boxes, hidden—many parts unknown.

Beef bone such a fundamental component of the soup, became the lens through which to explore this notion and began with the question—Where does this come from?

Having grown up in New Zealand on a typical meat and dairy heavy diet, I thought perhaps I might know a thing or two about beef and cattle, how wrong I was! From humble beginnings in 'The Fertile Crescent' Cattle proliferate the planet. It is widely accepted that what is now 1.4 billion animals and 1000 distinctive breeds, was once 80 individual animals—the Auroch. Now extinct these bovine ancestors of modern cattle were once so



Oxo cube, Kieren Wells

revered that they were immortalised in cave paintings in Lascaux, France.

Over time two distinct groups of cattle emerged: Zebu, and Taurine. While the zebu went east, the ancestors of modern taurine cattle went west, and with them people, settlements, and technology. Although common ancestry is clearly identifiable, today's cattle are significantly different to their ancestors of 10,500 years ago. Selective breeding, genetic modification, and the ravages of time all playing their part in effecting the physiology and behavioural traits of cattle. A preference for docility over aggression, polled cattle over horned, and new terms such as 'double muscled' used to describe these animals. In France several 'specialty' breeds have been developed, none more popular than the Charolais. Numbering around 4.2 million these guys are favoured for their resilience, and ability to 'pack on the pounds'.

So what might life look like for a Charolais? Broadly speaking there are two methods of beef production, conventional systems involving feedlots and grass fed operations. Debate rages about which of these is better or worse for the animal and for the environment, which is another research project in itself. However, what is true is that while a Charolais calves life might start on French soil it is more likely than not to end somewhere else. Each year more than 1 million calves are exported to feedlots in countries such as Italy, Turkey, and Algeria. Cattle, when left to their own devices can live up to 25 years—most now live between two and three.

France is Europe's largest producer with around 1.4 million tonnes of beef produced annually. This however pails in comparison to the likes of Brazil, the

US, and China. The scale of production and rate of consumption have far reaching effects that are hard to fathom. From loss of habitat and biodiversity, to deforestation, ozone depletion, and access to clean water. Cattle production is responsible for 10% of all global carbon emissions.

At this point in my research cattle had become meat, but where does the meat go? Per capita consumption differs significantly between countries. Topping the list are Uruguayans who consume 124kg of beef per person per year! Compare this to the Congolese that consume less than 1kg annually. This is only the meat, so where does the other 60% of an animal go? 'Byproducts' such as brain, blood, hooves, horns, organs, milk, manure, fat, skin, hair, and bone all find their way into obvious and obscure things, taking on new form as anti-aging creams, adhesives, medicines, film, confectionary, dyes, cement, plywood, and of course Oxo cubes.

We now have stock, or do we? The recipes we once shared and passed down through generations are now trade secrets and misnomers. Getting to the bottom of what is actually in our food is a difficult proposition. First developed in the 1800's Oxo utilised cattle carcasses from the leather trade in Uruguay to provide a cheap and 'nutritious' meat substitute for those unable to afford the real thing. To me, this didn't sound so bad. So what exactly is an Oxo cube? How much beef does a single cube contain? And what does the cube really measure? In the hope of simple answers I contacted the manufacturer. No comment.

With a fair amount of extrapolation, a number of assumptions, and the help of a friendly food technologist I estimate that each 5.9 gram cube of Oxo requires 13.4

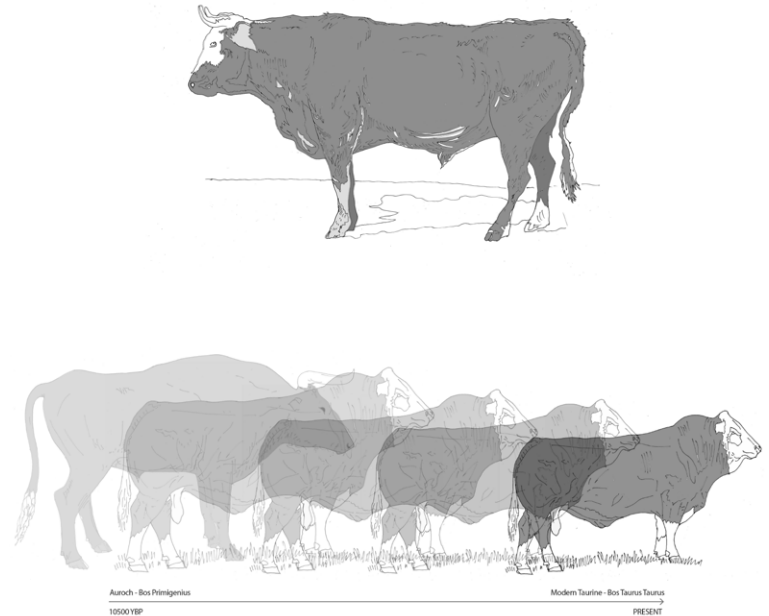
grams of beef and bone for flavour. So why does this matter? For me the concept and physical reality of an Oxo cube became a representation of a much bigger issue. That we are unaware of the impacts resulting from our food choices. That something as small as a single cube of Oxo might be a means of demonstrating this. Focussing solely on the beef and bone content of a single cube of Oxo, and ignoring all other ingredients I figured;

- 1kg of feed is required to produce the 13.4 grams of beef in one cube—170 times the cubes weight.
- The land used to produce this much beef is roughly equal to an area 2500 times the size of an Oxo's base.
- 13 litres of water is required to produce the 13 grams of beef in a single Oxo cube—1685 times the volume of the cube itself.
- Carbon emissions created for such a small amount of beef are the same as driving a car 1km—5000 times the Oxo's length.

We have shaped cattle and cattle have shaped us. They have shaped cities and landscapes, technology and typography. Whether you are a carnivore, omnivore, vegetarian, or vegan we are all indelibly linked and continue to be affected by cattle. Through the research I hoped to present an unbiased account of how Auroch became Oxo. Advocating nothing more than understanding and awareness—a realisation of the stories behind our food, and the impacts resulting from the choices we make.

Like many things food is not always what it seems. Next time you're in Paris consider the mounds which

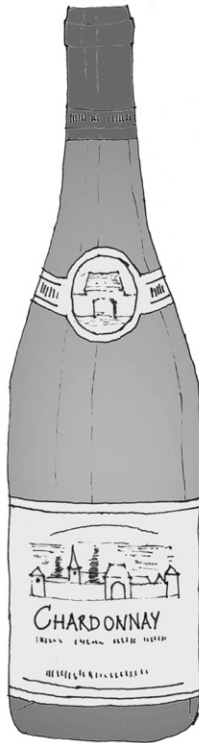
now sit within and around the city—over time formed by the carcasses of industrialised slaughter to feed the growing city.





# Ingredients—wine

Pamela Snow



Dry white wine and grapes, Kieren Wells

Dry white wine brings acidity to an onion soup, it cuts through the sugars and fats to balance and enhance the dish. Without it the soup would be heavy and generally unenjoyable.

Since the beginning of recorded history, wine has been considered an essential ingredient in cooking, a technique celebrated by the Greeks and spread by the Romans.

Grapes were first domesticated more than 6,000 years ago in south-western Asia. From the first discovery, the fermented juice produced not only a pleasant tasting beverage, but also had profound physiological effects on its drinker. It has played a central spiritual role in ceremonies, rituals and religion throughout history. Taking on the symbol of the cycle of life, death and rebirth, representing the essence of deity and also the agency to enter the presence of the divine. The pleasure of drinking wine, its economic success and elevated cultural meaning helped ensure its survival.

Winemakers have been using similar techniques for centuries, like other fruit crops, the grapevine is almost exclusively grown from cuttings of existing plants, versus seeds, keeping alive favoured vines and grape varieties for generations. This year scientists discovered that vines producing Savagnin Blanc grapes today in France are genetically identical to the vine grown by the Romans 900 years ago.

Winemaking is a slow and creative process, viewed often as an art, requiring knowledge, commitment and

time. The romanticised grape and vineyard, draw enthusiasts from around the world to consume, study and participate in the cultivating process.

Chardonnay, a variety often used for onion soup, originates from the Burgundy region in France. Chardonnay grapes thrive in the ancient limestone soil, reliant on only nature's allowance of sun and rain, the vines are carefully pruned and monitored for around 6 months. One hundred days after the vines flower the local government lifts the ban on picking grapes and the harvest begins. For a fortnight, hundreds of thousands of harvesters migrate to the region to pick the grapes by hand. Each harvester can collect up to 1 tonne of grapes per day. Once picked, the grapes are immediately pressed. The juice goes into a holding tank, where the sediment is removed, and then into a barrel where it is left to ferment for six to ten months.

Around twelve grape clusters, or fruit from roughly two vines, goes into each bottle of Chardonnay. The whole process from harvest to wine ready for consumption takes anywhere from one to two years. Around a quarter of the raw grape is discarded during the winemaking process, that's seeds, grape skins, and stems. Globally, 12 million tons of pomace is produced annually. Traditionally pomace is distilled into spirits, used as fertiliser or animal feed but whatever is left over likely ends up in a landfill. Pomace is now quickly gaining ground as a food supplement and promising biofuel. The biofuel is currently being trialled on a bus route in Bordeaux and if successful the pomace produced in Bordeaux alone could fuel a 1000 vehicles.

The packaging and transport of wine, is the product's largest carbon contributor due almost



**Fête des vendanges en Alsace Le Petit Journal, 1911**

entirely to the glass bottle. Like the ancient people, many winemakers are choosing to transport this globally loved product in bulk, reducing its carbon emissions by thirty percent. To support their efforts, when next purchasing wine to drink or cook with, consider taking refillable bottles to nearby bulk vendors.

À votre santé

# Ingredients——salt

Joe Ridealgh



1543



1735



2009

Time-line of salt dishes, Joe Ridealgh

Every ingredient that we take for granted today has travelled a rich and complex journey to be on our plate—salt being no exception. To tackle such an expansive topic, I have tried to consider the simple question—are you worth your salt?

Today a kitchen cupboard staple, salt is readily available and essential in most recipes. In the UK 1kg of salt can be bought for as little as £0.46. A product of supply and demand, salt is now incredibly cheap and undervalued. Yet, as a society we once understood its value as a commodity, with Roman soldiers said to have been paid in salt, hence the word 'salary'. Salt also has a high cultural value, in many countries it is associated with hospitality, trust and allegiance. For example, it is a Russian tradition to greet guests with a shared meal of bread and salt, the same gift is traditionally brought to bless a new Jewish home.

The changing value of salt has a particular relevance to the history of France. In the 13th century, the crown introduced the highly unpopular 'gabelle' tax, that increased the price of salt by as much as 1500% and saw France divided, with completely new borders based on regional salt production. A large tax was imposed on the area around Paris, known as the 'grand gabelle' whilst coastal regions that could easily harvest salt were completely exempt. This gross inequality in tax regions led to a rise in 'salt smuggling' over the new borders, in which countless people smuggled bags of salt into the

capital through varying methods such as, in one case, staging a fake funeral procession with a salt-filled coffin.

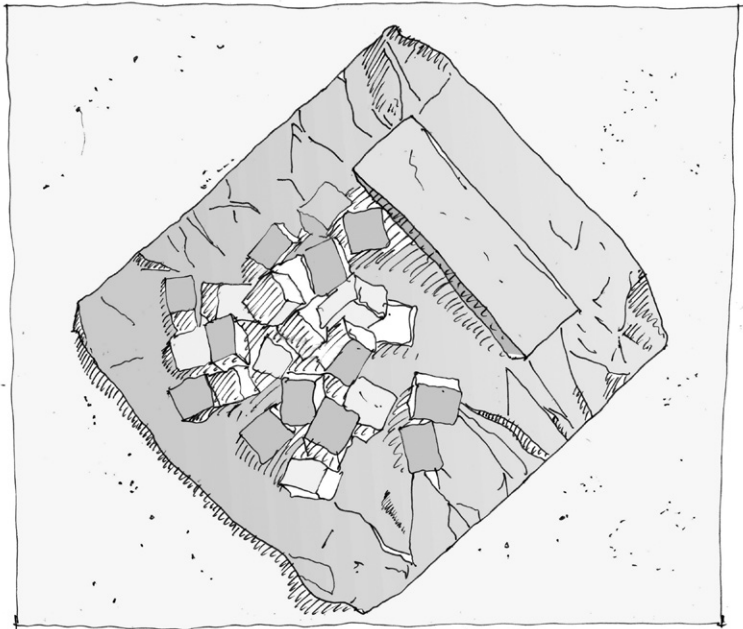
The increasingly active salt trade also meant an increase in the number of 'sauniers', the men who harvested the salt from sea water. The process by which it is extracted is still practiced today, in vast evaporation ponds such as the Île d'Oléron. The sauniers harvest from shallow man-made pools that are flooded with sea water. In the late afternoon, the sun has evaporated enough water for salt to crystallise in the water, which is then combed to the edge of the pond with a long stick. This technique has been predominantly replaced by the cheaper methods of industrial boiling and mining. The ponds are instead used today to produce a salt that is marketed as the more expensive Fleur de Sel.

Salt shaped French society to such an extent that there was even a dedicated salt market hall in Les Halles. A setting that seems far away from its new home on the supermarket shelf. This is of course a reflection of the monetary value of salt changing, thanks to new industry and the tax being dropped, but it can also be viewed as a mark of the cultural devaluing of salt as a commodity. We see this illustrated in how we consume salt today compared to consumption over previous centuries. Salt was once the centrepiece of the table and the act of sharing salt was integral to the performance of dining, with decorative salt cellars being popular for hundreds of years. Yet today, we dispense our salt from the most practical vessel, the saltshaker, if not the packet it is bought in. This act of sharing and symbol of hospitality, like many others, has been reduced with the monetary value of the ingredient. How can salt regain its cultural value? What if we

reinstate the position of shared items such as the salt cellar on the table? A commodity that is valued is seldom wasted.

# Ingredients—butter

Dorota Glab



Butter, Kieren Wells

It's a staple of sauces and baking alike. Without it, the croissant would be a leaden mass of flour, and the jambon-beurre sandwich missing a certain something.

Butter was discovered by accident, by a nomad riding on a horse for a day with a sheepskin container filled with milk strapped to the saddle. The churning of the milk solidified the fat in it into an easy to store and beautifully creamy texture.

Even though early records of butter consumption came from Roman and Arabic sources, butter was mostly popular in the northern European countries. It's most likely the ease with which you can store it, that made it more favorable in those countries and less so in the Mediterranean ones which much preferred olive oil for cooking.

The majority of Europe in the middle ages was Christian. The richness of butter was considered an indulgence and therefore banned by the church during lent. This proved rather difficult for the population, that was heavily reliant on it for cooking. However, the more well-off individuals found a way around it by paying a hefty donation to church in return for permission to eat butter. The demand for it was so high that the donations received financed the cathedral's Tour de Beurre—butter tower in Rouen, in northwestern France.

Between 1750 and 1850 in American colonies and early United States, butter was produced in small quantities by farm women, and in the late 18th century,

they started selling it on the markets. Sales of butter became a valuable way to gain more profit from the farm. Constant demand and the stable price of butter helped many families to survive the difficult times of economic downturn.

In France, butter was such an important part of the cuisine, that Napoleon offered an award to someone who could come up with a substitute. A French chemist in 1869 won the award and called his product 'oleomargarine,' which was later shortened to just margarine.

The French are indeed the biggest consumers of butter on the planet, by far. In 2016 the average French person consumed 8.2 kg of butter. That compared to 3.0 kg in Norway and 2.6 kg for an American.

In 2017 a rather strange thing happened to the butter market in France, there was a complete lack of butter to supply the country's demand. There were several explanations for this so-called Butter Crisis; firstly, the milk quota ended by the EU in 2015, which led to a rush to produce dairy but it created a collapse in milk prices, forcing some producers out of the market—leaving a limited volume of milk available to produce butter. Another issue was that in the summer of 2016 the yield of animal feed in France was considerably low which resulted in a lower volume of milk produced and sold. But the largest contributor to the butter crisis was the growing demand for dairy across the globe. China in particular is transitioning from a primarily dairy free diet to one which includes products high in milk, butter and cheese. The trend of butter being unhealthy has also faded in the past five years, increasing consumer demand in much of Europe and the U.S.A.

Such a moment triggers a favourite French pastime: The opportunity to engage in the intense questioning of everything....

The butter crisis in France is an existential crisis. What is life without butter? What does it mean to be French without butter? It's a culinary crisis. Butter without salt? Margarine?

Apparently there's a saying that there are 3 secrets to French cuisine: butter, more butter, and even more butter.

# 4

## Statement on degrowth #4

Timo Haedrich

### Degrowth: a statement from Haptic Architects

As an architectural profession, we inherently contribute to societal growth in a tangible and physical way. At this critical juncture, where climate change is at the forefront of our common agenda we must re-appraise our business strategies, architectural and construction practices. This includes designing for a circular economy, designing for disassembly and designing for *degrowth*; not necessarily building less, but building differently, intelligently and valuing social need before economic benefit. Such values must be clearly articulated to our clients and consulting teams, as partners that share a commitment to *Building for a Circular Future*.

Our recent work with large infrastructure projects uniquely positions our practice to think about the long-term impact of the profession. Designing to enhance social value, whilst reducing environmental impact, is critical. These are key issues that we will continue to explore in practice and in our academic teaching. We must reconcile our living and working in a global society against our impact on the natural world. By first defining what is 'enough' we could begin to set the agenda for future projects and our practice.

Timo Haedrich, Director of Haptic Architects

# **Notes from London [Part 2]**

## **June 2019**



# Reporting back

## An evening of soup, drink and discussion

Lauren Shevills

'La soupe à l'oignon' the evening conclusion for the Londonon Paris study-trip, saw one designer from each of the 6 Londonon practices, reflect on their Parisian experience, through the dissection of a traditional Parisian dish soupe à l'oignon. In a period where we now recognise that it is not simply 'business as usual' and that certain personal sacrifices have to be made, as part of a greater systemic change to avert ecological and environmental crisis; a reflection on our food consumption habits seems particularly timely.



**Morris+Company, Luke Matone**



**Londonon Friday night presentation, June 2019**

In recent years we have seen a shift from carefree consumerism, of takeout food and all of its associated produce and packaging waste, to a greater awareness of food miles, embodied carbon and the environmental impact of our meat consumption. Using Paris as a European case study, the Londonon team documented

the city's food production, consumption and disposal during their week-long study trip back in February 2019.

The 'evening of soup', which marked the summary of this journey included a recreated menu of soupe à l'oignon and was an opportunity to share findings, and to reflect on the relationship we as city dwellers have with our food. What better way to talk about how food shapes our cities, than over dinner with sixty plus architects?

A designer from every practice was assigned 1 of the 6 key ingredients that make up soupe à l'oignon and encouraged to dissect, describe, analyse and present their findings. Each of the practices had a unique interpretation of their own ingredient and when studied as individual ingredients in isolation, each component of the soup soon became detached from the recipe. Each piece of research, compelled the story tellers and wider audience to engage with surprising food consumption data, forming the departure points for the discussions that followed.

By examining each ingredient in isolation the room was able to see the object for what it was beyond the dish; it's journey from plate to compost via a myriad of countries and factories. Hanna Albrecht of Mae examined the precise area it would require to produce enough onions to supply Paris with its signature dish and contrasted it with the vast swaths of land where they are currently grown. Joe Ridealgh of Haptic, discussed the value we put on food in our society by examining the historic value of salt and the lack there of in present society. Kieren Wells of Morris+Company took a critical view on the intensely concentrated beef content of Oxo cubes, further dissecting a seemingly

simple or minor component of an onion soup. Naturally this lead to heated debate over the consumption of meat and the resources this requires, and not if, but when plant based diets would take over as being the status quo.

The combined picture painted by these stories encouraged the employees of the practices involved to join in open debate about their own relationship with food, which aligned with ongoing London Festival of Architecture's themes of feeding the city.

Strong themes emerged, including current reflections on the value of food, where food has come from, different spatial requirements for each ingredient and whether these fit with the urban fabric of Paris [and beyond]. Having presented past traditions and cultural and historical precedents, the discussion moved to looking forward and opened up to debate around future projections of over production and critical levels of food scarcity. From simple ingredients of a once humble dish came great depth and slightly alarming conclusions, food for thought.

# Preparing soup for 50

Dorota Glab



Morris+Company, Luke Matone

If you were to ask me: What do you like about cooking?

I would say that anything I do in the kitchen, whether it's chopping, slicing, dicing then cooking or baking, is much more than a process of preparing a meal. Food is something that brings us closer together with people, but also closer to different places in the world. Even though we may come from different cultures and do things differently, we all prepare food and eat it. Food is a way of sharing one's life and culture with another.

The word 'companion' comes from Latin and derives from two words 'com' which means 'together or with' and 'panis' which means bread. 'Compaignon' from

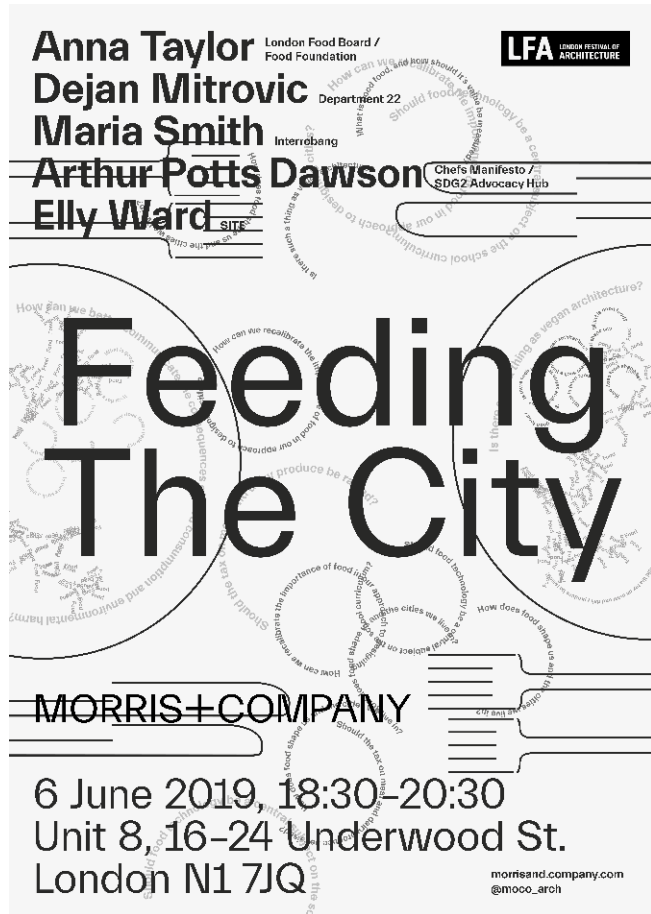
old French that means the one who breaks bread with another. Breaking bread with someone is at the core of our idea of companionship: sharing space and time, coming together around a table and sharing food.

Food can be an excuse to meet almost anywhere. Bringing food into an otherwise formal environment has the power to transform any space into something that feels more like home. With the table and the ritual of eating food together, we can not only give the space new meaning, but we can also give identity to urban locations and streets.

Making such a traditional dish as French onion soup brought us closer to the times in which it was first created. It's quite amazing to think that the soup we were having has probably tasted the same as it did throughout the centuries. Our ancestors used very similar ingredients, and their home was also filled with the same sweet smell of caramelised onion when they were cooking it.

Food is considered to be the most international language, which transcends race, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, age and class. What better way is there to bring people together, to slow down for a moment, to connect, to listen, to share than over a bowl of hot soup.

# London Festival of Architecture



Feeding The City poster design



La soupe à l'oignon poster design

# **Notes [to] Oslo**

## **September 2019**

# Anatomy of an installation

Hélène Solvay

## The dinner table for 6

Represents the 6 London practices and the time shared together discussing the questions related to global food production through research.

## The journal

A documentation of our journey: our recipe for degrowth onion soup as compilation of articles on the various strands of research carried out.

## The tablecloth

A visual narration of our journey to date  
Hand drawn illustrations are extracted from the journal and laid out so that narrative becomes ornament.

## The dinner set

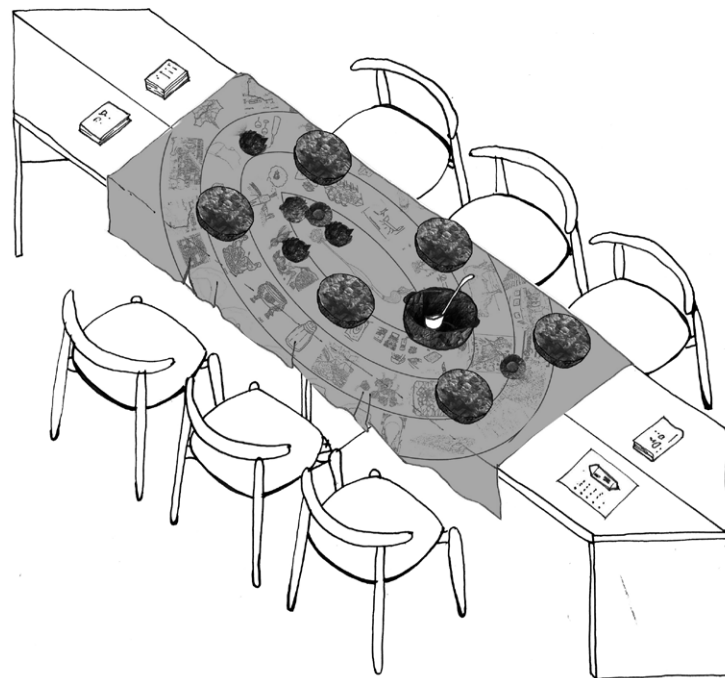
Interrogate the notion of waste—how can, instead of discarding them, we use our imagination and a resourceful approach to waste products—in this case onions skins are put 'centre stage', their delicate aesthetic qualities celebrated—becoming beautiful plates.

## Recipe cards

Visitors are invited to carry on the journey by making suggestions on how we might consider the future of onion soup on a piece of handmade seed paper.

The seed paper recipe gives pointers for visitors to

consider their own recipe—where will they source ingredients? who from? What kind of energy will be used to cook the soup? What will the soup be contained in?



**Isonometric sketch of the Oslo Architecture Triennale installation, Hélène Solvay**

# Towards a new degustation

Elly Ward

Taste is one of our primary senses and we use it to judge the flavour of the food and drink that we consume. French onion soup is traditionally rich, sweet and slightly bitter, but while flavours are universal, whether or not we like rich, sweet and bitter things is an individual matter.

We use taste to make decisions about everything that we consume, our clothing, our hairstyles, the music we listen to or the house we live in. We believe these decisions are driven by individual sensation and personal preference. From aesthetics to gastronomy, we suppose that the idea of taste suggests freedom of choice, and acts as a social indicator of how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us.

Our contemporary capitalist culture encourages the desire and glorification of things. We make value judgements about our consumptive choices based on cultural norms and societal aspirations. So when we are confronted with information that suggests our choices are not in the best interests of others, or even our own, we can become defensive and seek justification as to why our choices are valid.

Right now we are being confronted with some undeniable truths about how our consumption habits are affecting the environment as well as our own health and the lives of other species. Research tells us that 'going vegan' is the single biggest way of reducing your impact on the planet. However, 'going vegan' is

a challenging concept to those whose palettes have been defined through a traditional diet of meat and dairy and can therefore lack appeal.

Fortunately it is simple to change your physical taste preferences. A plant-based diet could even improve your ability to taste. Anecdotally, those who convert from a carnivorous diet to a vegan diet regularly report how their taste buds have become noticeably enhanced. Furthermore, science proves that omnivorous diets induce chronic inflammation, a condition commonly engendered in diseases such as obesity and cancer which affect the capacity to taste. Plant-based diets have an anti-inflammatory effect, so cutting out meat and dairy may not just help fight against disease, it could aid your appreciation of healthier food in general.

While we can perhaps easily adapt our taste buds, unfortunately it seems much harder to change our sociological taste preferences. But to say, in the context of increasingly compelling evidence, "I know that female cows are sentient beings who feel both physical and emotional pain yet are systematically raped by human hands to produce milk naturally intended for their babies who are killed at birth... and I know the dairy industry is extremely harmful to our climate, our soil, our water resources, the air we breathe, and to public health... and well I know there are many plant based cheese alternatives available but... I just like the taste of 'proper' cheese on top of my French onion soup..." is certainly sounding increasingly distasteful....

# Skin colour—non-toxic natural dyeing

Babs Behan

The textile industry is said to be the 2nd biggest polluter on the planet, after agro-chemical farming for food. This is largely due to the toxicity of synthetic chemicals required for the fibre growing, processing, textile dyeing and finishing. Textile dyeing used to be done with natural dyes derived from plants, insects and minerals, however, in the last 200 years we have become reliant on the use of synthetic and petro-chemical derived dyes for giving colour to our textiles and clothing. An item of clothing from the high street may typically contain over 300 different synthetic chemicals, which have been found to have an impact on the environment and on human health. Many common dyestuffs are known to have carcinogenic properties and can cause impotency, which can affect those processing the materials and also the consumers who wear the end products. In factories where workers process synthetic dyes, the mortality rate is typically as low as mid-thirties due to the toxicity levels they are exposed to daily. In less severe circumstances, workers commonly develop skin conditions such as eczema, and suffer problems with breathing due to over-exposure to vapours and air-bourne dust particles.

Botanical Inks is a non-toxic natural dye studio, run by natural dye artist/designer Babs Behan, which seeks to bring awareness to the toxicity of the textile industry

and provide viable alternatives which are non-toxic, biodegradable, traceable and responsibly sourced. Botanical Inks offers processes and materials which use regenerative agriculture systems, ie farming techniques which sequester carbon from the atmosphere and rebuild soil fertility, to neutralise the effects of climate change.

The Bristol Cloth is the first product to be offered to the market by Botanical Inks, which uses regeneratively farmed wool from Fernhill Farm [15 miles from Bristol], organic plant dyeing by Botanical Inks and artisan weaving by Bristol Weaving Mill, all within a 15 mile radius of Bristol. The other production systems [washing, carding, spinning, finishing and cutting] are all within the UK, making this an entirely UK based textile production system.

The Bristol Cloth is a fine example of people taking back the power to produce things responsibly, tracably and with care for those involved and the environment as a whole.

*We are a cottage industry of local community artisan suppliers, working together to create something beautiful which has a very low impact on the planet. [Babs Beha, Founder of Bristol Cloth]*

One of the main challenges facing sustainable fashion is creating behavioural change in consumers—Our biggest concern is to move away from fast fashion: to buying less, having less, using what we have more and making it last longer. This means having a select number of items which are well made with high quality fabrics, so that they will last [An item of clothing should last at least 10 years, or more], and having the skills to mend clothing before it breaks with simple sewing skills





**1 Simmering onion skins to extract colour**



**2 Gall-nuts for the purpose of making iron gall ink**



**5 Checking the uniformity of colour**



**6 Extracting the cloth from the natural dye bath**



**3 Gradually dipping the cloth into the water dye bath**



**4 Ensuring no air gets trapped into the fabric**



**7 Preparing the fabric for the final drawing**

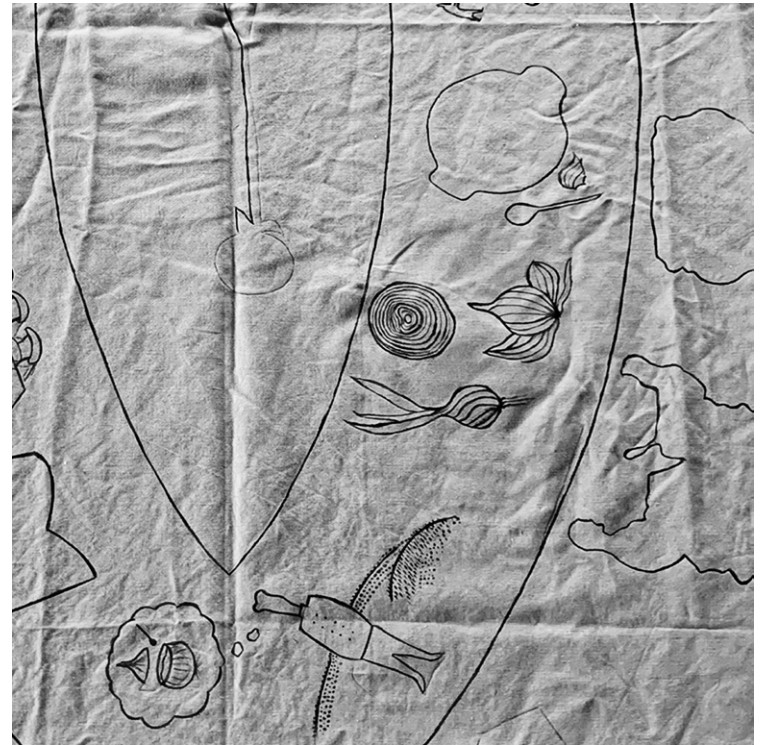


**8 Stencil transfer of the design**

**Photos by Emily Fribbance**



**The 'degrowth of onion soup', narrative tablecloth design—stencil preparation, Emily Fribbance**



**Inking the final design**

is something that has been almost entirely lost from our current culture. We need to see a re-skilling of this nature. Botanical Inks teaches people how to upcycle pre-loved clothing, so that they can extend the life of clothes they already have, by giving them a new lease of life. Dyes can be sourced from the local environment, from windfall leaves and flowers, farm waste and food waste from local shops and cafes.

In addition to the onions collected by the Londonon participants in London [making onion soup for 50 architects, engaging with Whitecross street, lunch food market vendors], our organic onion skin dyed table cloth is made with skins which we collected from Matter Wholefoods in Easton, Bristol. They kindly offered us their onion skins after making a batch of fermented onions to sell in their store. This is a great example of local circular design systems within the Bristol.

Find out more about Babs Behan's work with natural dyes and local regenerative textile systems here:

Botanical inks	<a href="http://www.botanicalinks.com">www.botanicalinks.com</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/botanicalinks">https://www.instagram.com/botanicalinks</a>
Bristol cloth	<a href="http://www.bristolcloth.co.uk">www.bristolcloth.co.uk</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/bristolcloth">www.instagram.com/bristolcloth</a>

# The onion skin that wanted to be a plate

Ian Hunter

## Making onion skin plates text

As part of Londonon's exploration of how architecture can impact food waste through the concept of 'Onion soup', we were tasked to produce tableware from the discarded onion skins of this storied dish.

A food-based analogue of the papier-mâché objects we made as children, the handmade plates and bowls exhibited are made of onion skin bound together with a bio-polymer resin.

In their own way, these onion skin objects address two of the major issues society is currently grappling with, namely, food waste and the use of plastic materials: food-waste, by showing that the part of the onion we throw-away also has value; and plastics, by demonstrating that we can reap the benefits of this wonder material while avoiding non-renewable fossil fuels as a raw-material and the associated negative environmental impacts. The results are objects that biodegrade at the end of their useful life, returning nutrients back to the biological cycle.

To make the plates we first gathered sacks of onion skins discarded by local restaurants. A slightly smelly affair, we admit. We then processed the skins—starting with the chopping of the skins into small fragments which would allow us to mould them into three dimensional forms.

With our skins prepared we produced the bio-polymer binder. Bio-polymers, more commonly 'bio-plastics', are simply plastics produced from renewable biological materials. The raw materials can be sourced from many places, corn, milk, or palm-oil for example. In fact, we each carry bio-polymers with us all the time in our keratin-based hair and finger nails.

The bio-polymer binder produced is made from everyday household kitchen cupboard items. It is non-toxic and biodegradable. Technically, it is edible... although we wouldn't recommend eating it. The ingredients are corn starch, gelatin, distilled vinegar, glycerin and water.

The corn starch and gelatin provide the hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen molecules needed to form the long polymer chains that make up the bio-polymer. The glycerin acts as a plasticiser, affecting the rigidity of the material. Vinegar contains acetic acid, which forms hydrogen and acetate ions that encourages the chemical reaction to occur. And finally, water acts as a solvent, allowing all the other ingredients to be combined in a single solution. These ingredients are measured, mixed and then heated to form a glue-like resin.

Once the resin is prepared the onion skins are stirred in until the mixture is fully loaded. The skins reinforcing the bio-polymer material, act as 'filler' reducing the amount of bio-polymer required and provide decoration. This bio-composite mixture is then placed into a mould, pressed, and left to cure. Et voilà, with this simple process we have a wonderful collection of onion-skin plates.



**Bio-polymer ingredients**

### Materials Council

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**1 Bio-polymer ingredients**



**2 Onion skins**



**3 Glycerin and vinegar is added**



**4 Water is added**



**5 Corn-starch and gelatin is added and stirred**



**6 Gently heat the mixture**



**7 After a couple of minutes polymerisation occurs**



**8 Once the resin is ready the onion skin is added**



**9 Stir in skins—the mixture is stirred to an even consistency**



**10 The mixture is placed into a mould**

# Continuing the journey— #degrowthOnionSoup

## Recipe #degrowthOnionSoup

We invite you to join us in imagining the future of onion soup. Let's rethink all aspects of food processing; where we will get our ingredients from, how and by whom they will be produced, how we will cook them and finally, how will we enjoy the moment of 'dégustation'?

Fill out this recipe card & share with #degrowthOnionSoup along with anything else it inspires you to do!

### Ingredients

What will you put in your soup?  
How will you source the ingredients?

- 1 **Onions?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe card

### 1 Prepare your ingredients, peel and chop your onions.

How much waste will you produce and what could you do with it?

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### 2 Cook your soup.

Using heat? Do you know how much energy you will need? Where will it come from?

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### 3 Eat your soup.

How will you serve it? Who will you share it with? Any leftovers?

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### 4 Plant this recipe card and see it grow.

Shred this seed paper, plant it in soil, give it light and water, then watch your ingredient grow. Perhaps you can add it to your next recipe!

#degrowthOnionSoup  
www.londonon.global

# 5

## Statement on degrowth #5

Joe Morris and Elly Ward

So we are faced with the twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss as the most serious issue of our time. Consequently, there have been a sequence of declarations seeking to rally our industry; from 17 Stirling Prize winners, the RIBA, the schools of architectural education. These declarations follow the UN Council's recent warning that we have just twelve years to avert irreversible climatic damage caused by a global increase in average temperature of just 1.5 degrees.

But what then are we to do beyond platitudes? How are we to enact the change that is required? What is anyone really doing about this? As Simon Sturgis [RIBA's adviser on sustainability] has already said:

*this is not a simple bolt-on, but a fundamental rethink of the design process.*

There is an obvious point to make here. Buildings in themselves, cannot be the solution to this crisis and therein lies the paradox. If we agree that buildings are necessary, we must also agree that by nature they are destructive and environmentally exploitative. They destabilise the balanced system of nature, both in construction and in use. The methods by which we design, construct and inhabit cannot react quickly enough to help resolve the crisis. Buildings, in fact, will only continue to exacerbate the problem. Put simply, we cannot rely on architecture alone to resolve this crisis. For the declaration to achieve any amount of positive

traction what is needed is both a systematic and societal reversal of attitude, and a method for action.

## A five point plan to save the planet [as an architect]

### 1 Go vegan, now

The planet cannot simply be saved by the act of doing things and making things. It requires us to 'not do' things which are harmful. According to research by the University of Oxford, 'going vegan' is the single biggest way of reducing your impact on the planet. So it follows that any declaration or acknowledgement of the climate crisis as an architect requires you to stop eating meat, stop consuming dairy, stop wearing leather and eradicate any animal product from your existence before you do anything else. And to do it now.

### 2 Get everyone you know to go vegan

There are obvious parallels between the expansion of the construction industry. Through the construction of our built environment and the industrialisation of our food systems, humanity has been distanced from the planet's natural rhythms. Our profession is rife with societal paradox and hypocrisy. Supposed animal lovers eat meat farmed using cruel factory methods; architects declaring climate crisis travel by private jet and build air polluting airports. It is improbable that we can change

the entire industry quickly enough. But if a critical mass were to change habits at consumer level, this would have a profoundly positive impact, buying us some critical time to make broader changes to the habits of the construction, transport and energy sectors.

### 3 Be radical

There is no time left for gestures or half measures. This problem is massive and it requires each of us to be fundamentally transformative. Our actions directly affect others, locally and globally. We are each required to immediately reflect upon our everyday existence, seeking ways to eradicate any environmentally damaging habit, by whatever means; omit unnecessary air travel, walk or cycle everywhere, eliminate non-renewable materials and single use products from our lives, investigate the supply chain of our homes, our offices and our professional network, reuse everything. Don't wait for others to take the lead, take responsibility for your own actions. Be innovative and demand innovation. Ask yourself if your personal tastes and preferences are more important than the planet. Give up the things you are used to. Go cold tofu.

### 4 Celebrate the ordinary

Solutions can be found in innovation but this is also about going back to basics. Eradicate whimsical decision making and forgo fashion as an aesthetic dilemma. The culture and the image of practice needs to be one that is a representation of the society it serves, not one obsessed with its own self image. A future practice and architecture that actually engages with its own existence and represents its societal and environmental challenges.



## 5 Treat cynicism as opportunity

Kill the naysayers and haters with success and delight. Treat clients, colleagues, contemporaries, consultants and collaborators with kindness and understanding even if they are resistant. Remember that once, you too, were part of the problem, not the solution. Show them that sustainable, ethical and ecological architecture doesn't have to be hairy or ugly. Show them it can be cool, intelligent and more beautiful than ever before through a shared, spiritual connection with the planet and all those who inhabit it. Invite your competitors to join you, to do better. Together, rewrite the archaic virtues of *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas* to mean something more conscious, empathetic and collective.

Joe Morris, Director Morris+Company, co-authored with Elly Ward, Both/And

# On our way to Oslo—the degrowth of delivery

Hélène Solvay

Finally, we ask ourselves—how will we bring our installation to Oslo?

The penultimate step in telling our story of the degrowth of onion soup allows us to look more closely at a process which we take for granted—that of transportation. Whether in the context of food, online shopping or moving ourselves geographically—for a long time we would consider this against two factors: time vs cost.

How often do we find ourselves calculating our options in situations such as these:

...buying groceries at the corner shop downstairs or treading to the supermarket for better value for money?

...booking the cheap Ryanair flight from Luton or British Airways from London City Airport?

...clicking the Amazon standard delivery [7—10 days] or Amazon Prime [next day]?

Yet we know that even when we do choose to spend a little more money to save time [the express option] this is still a somewhat economically driven decision, time = money being embedded deep down into our decision making process.

Considering a degrowth mode of transport to bring our installation to the Oslo Architecture Triennale has raised a number of questions, notably that of CO2 emissions but also of human capacity—can you really ask someone to cycle 1700 km from London to Oslo

without increasing their calorie intake? Can we really commit to travelling 6 days by train for the benefit of 2 days on location? Or, should we give in to the reality of work pressures, the plane journey and its promise of door-to-door efficiency?

The debate is open... for now, two lucky Londonon participants will be indulging in a 3 day train journey taking us from London to Brussels, to Cologne, to Hamburg, to Copenhagen, to Gotenburg and finally to Oslo—degrowth as an excuse to enjoy hours of card games, reading and passive gazing at the streaming landscapes of the 5 countries we will be crossing.

London [to] Oslo—Train to Oslo

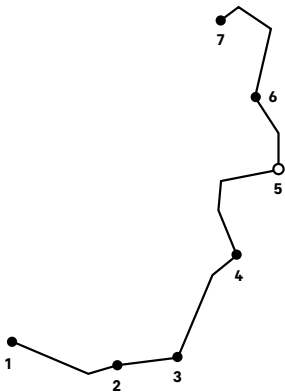
Chooosen train route

- 1 London to Brussels
- 2 Brussels to Cologne
- 3 Cologne to Hamburg
- 4 Hamburg to Copenhagen

[Night in Copenhagen]

- 5 Copenhagen to Gothenburg
- 6 Gothenburg to Oslo

Total CO2: 50kg

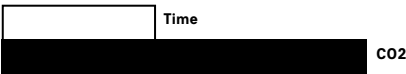


Considered routes

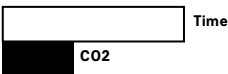
Plane 4 hours  
200 kg CO2



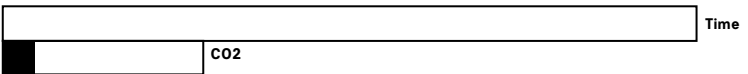
Car 21 hours  
335 kg CO2 [av. petrol]  
235 kg CO2 [av. hybrid]



Train 1 day+  
50 kg CO2 [2000 km]



Bike 1 week+  
20 kg CO2  
[ferry = 0.12 kg per km]+  
117 kg CO2 [additional cal]



Train to Oslo instead of flying saves the emissions equivalent to 60 bowls of French onion soup.

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