

Art History as Inspiration for Chefs. An Autoethnographic Research About Art History Education in a Restaurant

Authors : Marta Merkl

Abstract : The ongoing project what the paper will present is about how the author introduces chefs to the history of art through a selected piece of art. The author is originally an art historian, but since 2019 she has been working on her PhD research topic related to designing dining experiences in the restaurant context, including the role of sensory experiences and storytelling. Due to a scholarship, she can participate in the re-design of a fine dining restaurant called Onyx in Budapest, which was awarded two Michelin stars before the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The management of the restaurant wants to broaden the chefs' horizons and develop their creativity by introducing them to each chapter of the visual arts. There is a kind of polyphony in the mass of information about what should a chef, a food designer, or anybody who make food in everyday basis use as a source of inspiration for inventing and preparing new dishes: nostalgia, raw material, cookbooks, etc. In today's world of fine dining, nature is the main inspiration for outstanding achievements, as exemplified by the Slovenian restaurant Hiša Franko** and its chef Ana Roš. The starting point for the project and the research was the idea of using art history as an inspiration for gastronomy. The research relies on data collection via interviews, ethnography, and autoethnography. In this case, the reflective introspection of the researcher is also relevant because the researcher is an important part of the process (GOULD, 1995). The paper overviews the findings of the autoethnography literature relevant to our topic. In the literature review, it will be also pointed out that sustainability, eating as an experience, and the world of art can be linked. As ERDMANN and co-authors (1999) argues that the health dimension of sustainability has a component called 'joy of eating,' which implies strong ties to the experiential nature of eating. Therefore, it is worth to compare with PINE and GILMORE's (1998) theory of experience economy and with CSÍKSZENTMIHÁLYI's (1999) concept of flow, which give examples of gastronomy and art. The aim of the research is to map experiences of the pilot project, the discourse between the art world and the gastronomy actors. Another noteworthy aspect is whether the chefs are willing to use art history as an inspiration.

Keywords : art history, autoethnography, chef, education, experience, food preparation, inspiration, sustainability

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