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## Essays on Aesthetics of Food

Marya Alhelaili

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**Essays on Aesthetics of Food**

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**Thesis submitted to the  
Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design  
at West Virginia University**

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Science  
in  
Design and Merchandising**

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**School of Design and Community Development**

**Morgantown, WV**

**2015**

**KEYWORDS:** Food Aesthetics, Food Presentation, Food Design, Food Gratification,  
Food Styling, Table Setting Design

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## **Abstract**

### **Essays on Aesthetics of Food**

**Marya Alhelaili**

This thesis is comprised of three essays that explore the aesthetics of food in contemporary food and table setting design. The essays are:

1. Aesthetics of Food
2. Food Design
3. Table Setting Design

Food is an everyday necessity. With advancements in production and a plentiful supply in developed countries, the preparation of food and its consumption has developed socially and artistically. There is increased emphasis being placed on how to make and present food in nontraditional ways to enhance aesthetic appeal. Yet, there is not consensus about the aesthetic dimensions of food. The viewpoint that food should be considered a source of aesthetics in our daily lives is becoming more accepted, and the literature in support of this notion is increasing. Food design is seen as essential to creating positive emotions and meaningful memories surrounding the aesthetics, pleasure and satisfaction of food experiences. The importance of food design transcends the food industry, being of particular importance to the worldwide tourism industry. Based on the literature, it appears that a more developed understanding of food design enables both the home cook and the professional chef to provide more meaningful dining experiences. Food styling, a component of food design, remains controversial. Despite such controversies, content and appearance can be balanced relative to one another, thus food styling remains an important and essential element of food design. The dining area is considered by many families throughout the world to be the most important area of the home, with the meal

table playing a central role in family life, socialization and entertaining friends and extended family members. Families often expend significant resources in purchasing a table and associated tableware. The concept of table design goes beyond simply the architectural style of the table itself, to include all of the design elements a host utilizes on the table surface in order to create a satisfying and engaging meal experience. Table design can be considered a holistic form of art by the host who takes into account not only choice of table, but also uses standards and best practices to make numerous detail-oriented decisions, such as style of tablecloth, types of dinnerware, serveware and stemware, and overall table surface organization.

In summary, popular culture and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is significant value to the aesthetics of food. However, much of the academic literature seems to focus on the economic value of food production, population, the restaurant industry, and tourism. An examination of the literature related to food aesthetics and design, culture, and tradition supports the premise that food aesthetics may impact people's food choices and supports the need for further study.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

People of the Middle East have a traditional saying, “The eye eats before the mouth,” stressing the importance of the appearance of food, its presentation and appeal to the eye. To expand further on the concept of “The eye eats before the mouth,” as a known cultural tradition, food can be understood as a fluid expression of different types of cultures, tastes and preferences. The phrase, “The eye eats before the mouth,” is known not only in Saudi Arabia, but in other countries such as Lebanon, Qatar and Palestine. The Igbo people, an ethnic group in southeastern Nigeria, for example, have a cultural tradition of sharing proverbs, many of which involve food or use food as a metaphor. These proverbs are a key part of African culture, transferred from generation to generation. A variation of the phrase, “The eye eats before the mouth,” may be heard in Western countries such as the United States, where people say, “The eyes are larger than the stomach.” Although the meaning of the American variation is slightly different, the Americanized phrase also refers to the eyes as a key component of gastronomy, in addition to the digestive system. If considering all of the variations of “The eye eats before the mouth” throughout the world, the phrase seems to take on a universal quality.

However, it is important to note, that in addition to a universal meaning, “The eye eats before the mouth,” can simultaneously become a gateway to accessing the culture of a certain place, since food and its presentation is shaped by environment. Food preparation can speak across generations as a component of cultural storytelling. Food preparation is affected by regional terrain and local eating habits, which give the foods of various cultures specific meanings within those populations (Anderson, 2004.)

The universal meaning of the cultural phrase, “The eye eats before the mouth,” is that human beings prefer to eat what is attractively presented. A deeper cultural and biological

meaning is that people tend to prepare for eating with our senses. Digestion begins in the mouth; however, the production of saliva is stimulated as we visualize appetizing food, smell food, or remember a meal time. Thus, eating is sensory and directly involves our sight, taste, smell, and our brain.

### **Aesthetics of Food**

In human perception, aesthetics is linked to abstract art (Abstract Art, 2015). The dictionary definition of aesthetics is “a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty” (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). This also applies to the concept of food presentation. Food presentation deals with a set of defined principles. Therefore, the aesthetics of food is more like a discipline, a practice of giving food an attractive and pleasing appearance. This discipline holds true across national borders, despite the fact that people of diverse backgrounds and cultures may have different approaches toward how to set and follow these principles. The definition of aesthetics includes the appreciation of the beauty of food. This means that people have subjective differences in how much they appreciate the aesthetics of food. People from different cultures and backgrounds may have varying perceptions regarding food and often see food through their past experience, their unique cultural lenses and also through environmental factors, such as which foods are available in their regions.

Due to industrialization, globalization and other economic factors, an increasing number of people throughout the world pay more attention to the appearance of food. The food and agriculture sector is estimated by the World Bank to account for 10% of global product, or about US\$4.8 trillion in 2006 (Murray, 2007). The global restaurant industry is currently estimated by various reports to be valued at more than \$2 trillion U.S. dollars, and is expected to rise as modern families find themselves increasingly lacking time and looking for convenience along

with pleasant dining out experiences. A demand exists for experienced chefs who are talented and trained in the culinary arts.

Throughout the world, food is increasingly being viewed as a form of art (Gopnik, 2009). People in the world's more affluent countries are recognizing a value of food beyond only that which is a necessity for life and on a global level, it is increasingly being understood that eating and drinking is a way in which we can experience our own creativity and individuality. Moreover, careful presentation of food can connect us with other people, show our deepest friendship, generosity and hospitality to our friends and loved ones. This translates into our personal lifestyle and aesthetics, giving us a way to more fully enjoy our lives, social bonds and community.

A central question surrounding food aesthetics is whether or not food can be considered as art. Some agree, but others question this idea, or strongly disagree (Gopnik, 2009). The arguments surrounding whether or not food can be art span the range of ideas, from the problem of originality (for example, whether or not most food preparation is merely following others' recipes) to food as necessity, utility, etc. The question of food as art also involves issues of hunger and food justice. Some authors argue that food is not art due to inherent or qualitative differences. Others claim that for food to be considered art, its presentation must be combined with other more recognized art forms such as music or dance.

Art critics such as Blake Gopnik (2009) note an important difference between food and design, or how food is presented; for example, some say only the presentation of food could possibly be considered art and not the food itself. These authors note the difference between food as a building material and the act of creating a sculpture out of food. This argument is similar to the difference between oil paint colors and a finished painting, elegantly framed and displayed in

an art gallery or building of fine architecture. In this sense, art is what is in the mind of the person and not the materials with which the artist creates.

Despite such arguments, an argument can be made that food has artistic qualities that can encompass a wide spectrum of human emotions. The time and creativity which can be a part of food preparation, along with the impermanent nature of food, seems to match other forms of temporary art such as a sand art on a beach, ice sculpture, a flash mob street performance or other types of performance art. One could think of the waves “eating” away at sand art as the tide comes in, which seems to parallel, in terms of similar action or outcome, the chewing of bites of food, until all the food is eaten. A similar parallel is found in the melting of an ice sculpture and the disappearance of food.

Another argument in favor of food as art is that food can cross cultural boundaries in an artistic way, due to intrinsic qualities that create a powerful aesthetic sensation through the range of senses, taste, sight, touch, smell, and even hearing, etc., in the human body. From the point of view of food being art, food cannot be disconnected from culture. An argument can be made that without art, culture could not exist, and because food is such a pervasive part of culture, it is connected to all the other arts, as well as history, ethnicity, etc., of particular cultures.

In terms of social and economic history, industrial food production and increased skill-work specialization appears to have had an effect of influencing more people, at least in developed countries where food is plentiful, to have enough time, personal resources, education and capacity to think of food as art. However, the availability of food, and thus the relative luxury with which some can enjoy food for its aesthetic qualities, does not necessarily include every part of the world. The United Nations reports that nearly a billion people are hungry, or do not have access to clean drinking water (UNDESA, 2014). The country or region in which a

person lives and, in particular, where an individual falls on the economic scale, profoundly affects whether one views food as art or as survival.

With these various arguments, issues and points of view taken into consideration, Essay 1 further examines the aesthetics of food in an attempt to determine if the manner in which it is presented can be considered art.

## **Food Design**

Whether we eat at home or at restaurants, preparing food and presenting it to look attractive and seemingly delicious is an integral part of our dining table experience. Food design is essential to creating positive emotions and meaningful memories. A more nuanced understanding of the sub-disciplines of food design enables both the home cook and the professional of the culinary arts to provide optimal food experiences. These sub-disciplines include designs about food, food space or interior design, eating design, design for food, food product design, and design with food. Historically, food design has been a tool to provide pleasure and status, as in the case of nobility and the upper class. The development of a traveling trading class of merchants created a need for food spaces such as restaurants, taverns, pubs and inns.

Contemporary food design involves a practice known as food styling. Food styling has transformed the way people look at food. This transformation, backed up by brilliant marketing tools, is affecting consumers' choices and preferences of food. The practice of food styling includes both restaurant and grocery store product packaging and food advertising. Food styling is considered by some consumers to be somewhat controversial, particularly when the stylist introduces additives, colors, elements or digital photographic techniques which are not part of the original food. Thus, food can be made, with modern techniques, to appear more attractive

than it actually is. This controversy is especially acute in terms of the advertising industry, where often, foods shown in television commercials or in posters do not match the appearance of the food when purchased or consumed. Often the advertised pictures make the food look better than it is when seen in person or consumed. Thus, we can consider this a case in which the product may not match the advertising.

Despite such controversies, food styling can be considered an important and necessary component of food design. Most people would not want to eat food that does not look delicious on the packaging or in advertising. If done according to carefully-considered and publicly discussed industry or government food standards, food styling can have a positive influence on consumer behavior. For example, such styling could encourage people to try new foods, including healthy foods or foods from other cultures, which they may not otherwise try.

In summary, food design plays an important role in gastronomy by increasing food's appeal in various settings. Essay 2 looks at food design and modern food styling, and how both add a dimension of value and attraction in the minds of consumers.

### **Table Setting Design**

The dining area is where family members gather, not only for food, but also for chatting, joking, and talking about what they had accomplished during a work or study day. It is also the place where friends and relatives spend most of their time when they visit a family. Most cultures place a great deal of importance on having a dining room table which fits their needs. Families are willing to invest much time and money in the design and equipment of their dining rooms. Of all the furniture in the dining room, the dining table is central. The table becomes the focal point when one enters the dining room. The kind of table chosen influences the atmosphere created for the dining experience. Essay 3 further explores the concept of table design and the

design elements a host utilizes on the table in order to create a satisfying and engaging meal experience. Thus table design can be considered a holistic form of dining room art or design that takes into account the dining room hosts' choice of table, which is matched aesthetically with the hosts' decisions regarding whether the meal is formal or informal, and numerous detail-oriented creative decisions such as style of tablecloth (color, texture, etc.), organization in which all necessary components of the meal is set on the table (table setting), types of dinnerware that will be used (materials, strength, color, patterns, etc.), and which serveware and stemware will be used to best please the guests through ease of use, appeal to the eye and palate, and to best match the specific food being served.

### **Problem Statement**

Popular culture and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is significant value to the aesthetics of food. However, much of the academic literature seems to focus on the economic value of food production, population, the restaurant industry, and tourism. An examination of food aesthetics and design, culture, and tradition is needed to assess the premise that food aesthetics may impact people's food choices.



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## **Chapter 2: Essay 1 - Aesthetics of Food**

### **Abstract**

Food is an everyday necessity. With advancement in production and plentiful supply in developed countries, food has been transformed to a social event and a way to show artistic skills. More emphasis has been placed on how to make and present food in nontraditional ways to enhance aesthetic appeal. Yet, people are not unified when it comes to attaching an aesthetic description to food. More experts seem inclined toward the viewpoint that food should be considered a source of aesthetics in our daily lives.

### **Food as a Source of Gratification**

Food is not culturally restricted. All people can enjoy food regardless of their inclinations, ethnicity, experiences or background (Mcree, 2013). I have personally witnessed this several times when we participated in open houses. We would make a traditional dish and offer to share it with guests. At first, I was doubtful that the majority would be interested in even trying the dishes we presented. I was wrong. To my surprise, not only did people try it, they loved and devoured what we had. The number of local dishes from many cultures, which have gone international is too many to count; in almost every city and country I went to or read about, big crowds of people would be found waiting in lines for a Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, Italian restaurants. These restaurants are living testimonies to the fact that food is not limited by boundaries. People appreciate what they consider good dishes regardless of who made them and what they could symbolize.

### **Food Making and Presentation: A Form of Art**

A good start would be to lay some foundations for some of the terms which will be frequently used in this section, such as aesthetics and art. Elizabeth Telfer (1996), in her book,

Food for Thought, defines aesthetics as anything which is capable of inducing aesthetic reactions. Aesthetic reactions, in turn, have five features, according to Telfer (1996):

1. Aesthetic reactions should happen out of appreciating the work per se. This means that they should not be affected by other factors like the person who created the aesthetic work itself or the atmosphere surrounding it.
2. Aesthetic reactions provoke a variety of feelings. Pleasure is not necessarily one of these feelings since, according to Telfer, a well written novel with a sad ending does not provoke pleasure.
3. Aesthetic reactions are intense in nature. Subtle reactions usually don't accompany aesthetic reactions.
4. Aesthetic reactions are frequently, but not always, sensual.
5. Aesthetic reactions are usually objective. This means that most people would share similar feelings and opinions about them.

The other term, art, is an original creation according to Telfer (1996). The dictionary defines art as "the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance" (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). According to Aaron Meskin (2013), an issue with Telfer's definition is that the vast majority of food made would not be considered art because it's not original. People who make food basically follow the steps of the original recipe. The same applies to musicians who play the complex pieces created by famous musicians such as Beethoven and Bach. Such musicians can't be considered as presenting a work of art if Telfer's definition of art is considered because they do not present original work. Ironically, this could be the case despite the probability that they could play the music even better than the composers who composed them (Meskin, 2013).

Characterizing food as art remains controversial. It is definitely not a straight forward argument and each party holds enough reasons and justifications for what they believe regarding food. The party who believes that food is merely a necessity and can't be viewed as an art claim that food, unlike other forms of art, is an indispensable requirement for us to stay alive (Meskin, 2013). Steven Poole, a prominent opponent to the approach some take in treating food as a form of art, uses similar arguments. Poole argues against making direct comparisons between, for example, a symphony and a steak (2012). Although acknowledging Poole's contribution to the argument against food as art, Meskin (2013), in his *The Art and Aesthetics of Food*, looks at this subject from a different angle. While he agrees that food can be art per se, and that food can be part of an emerging hybrid form of art where two or more forms of arts are combined, food being one of them, Meskin does not approve of the approach many writers follow in trying to prove that food should be considered a form of art. Meskin acknowledges that at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition a contemporary artist, Le Courtois, used food in diverse ways to create artistic shapes, such as sculptures made of melted candy or Cheetos, curtains made of candy and marshmallows. However, Meskin (2013) argues that we should ask the question: can food be art? rather than: is food an art? He refers to Antonin Carême, the famous nineteenth century chef and cookbook author, and mocks when Antonin considered pastry as a branch of architecture. Architecture is considered to be one of the five principal forms of fine arts in addition to painting, sculpture, poetry, and music. In addressing the question of can food be art, Meskin (2013) does not mind accepting that food, like any other item, can be art, but he adds that when food items are used to make an artistic sculpture like what Le Courtois did at the Boulder Museum, the form of art here is sculpture, not food itself. Meskin disagrees with Telfer's arguments, where she considered food as art by itself while counting cookery as an art form. The

basis for Telfer's consideration was the assumption that food is sometimes viewed for its aesthetic contemplation. Meskin criticizes Telfer's definition of art. He believes that throughout human history art has played a functional, rather than solely an aesthetic role. Meskin (2013) comments on Telfer's somewhat changed tone, when she called food a simple and minor form of art: Simple because it's not as complex as other forms of art, and minor because it's transient and can't move us like other forms of art. Food does move, at least, some of us, according to Meskin, who notes that transience does not apply to food only. It applies to some other forms of art such as carving on the sands or the ice sculptures. Moreover, not only food is simple. Other forms of art, such as some forms of music and painting, are simple too.

Another objection to the idea that food is an art is that whatever meaning food may have is contextual. This means that the connotation associated with food is variable and occasion-dependent. Food is unlike other forms of art, which generally have almost a consistent meaning that is not affected by time or occasion. For example, we associate a dish with mom's cooking (home-made pastry), a geographical region (koskos is associated with Morocco), or a holiday (a Thanksgiving turkey) (Furrow, 2013). But people who adopt this idea admit that food is not always devoid of an intrinsic meaning. A nice example would be the melt-in-the-mouth texture of chocolate. It has an intrinsic meaning related to special status of chocolate in romance. This feeling caused by eating chocolate will always be sensed regardless of the context or occasion. Another example, albeit less romantic, is the Japanese practice of eating the poisonous Puffer fish, fugu, or the practice of presenting the head or carcass of an animal at the table as practiced by some people in the Middle East, and the most striking is the illegal French practice of swallowing a small, de-feathered bird whole where diners cover their heads to hide the shame of the feast from God's eyes (Furrow, 2013) (Figure 1). According to Carolyn Korsmeyer, as

referenced by Furrow (2013), these examples, in which the meaning of a sacrifice is deliberately shown, are brutal and disgusting because they present the food close to its animal form, whereas the norm is to make a distance between the original recognizable form of the animal and the final form presented on dishes.



**Figure 1:** The illegal French practice of swallowing a small, de-feathered bird whole where diners cover their heads to hide the shame of the feast from God's eyes. Source (Furrow, 2013).

According to Mcrec (2013), Tefler shares philosophical aesthetics author Ellen Dissanayake's viewpoint that food should be enjoyed for "its own sake", which means food is to be appreciated without any personal gain. Compared to other forms of art, food has a unique feature and advantage at the same time: it appeals to multiple senses. While music appeals to the ears, sculptures appeal to the sight and touch, and paintings and architecture appeal to the eye.

Food, on the other hand, appeals to the taste, smell, sight, touch, and possibly hearing. It's not debatable that food is the ultimate stimulator of the sense of taste. It's actually the only form of art that moves our taste buds. It's a source of content and pleasure to look at food elegantly placed on plates, and which has beautifully mixed colors. This is appealing to the eyes (sight). Smelling food aroma is an enjoyable experience which all of us live almost every day (smell). At the same time, the texture of many food items moves our sense of touch (Mcree, 2013). For example, it feels good when you touch a warm loaf of bread, whereas an apple evokes a different feeling. Therefore, different foods stimulate different touch feelings. The last and fifth sense, hearing, may also be stimulated by the sound of food. The sound of frying does stimulate your ears to signal a specific feeling that is tied to previous experiences. Similarly, the sound of bubbling soda invokes the feeling of thirst in a person and provokes specific feelings. This is an exceptional feature of food, which entitles it to a distinguished position among different forms of art (Mcree, 2013).

Gopnik (2009) tackles the question of whether food is an art or not in a thought-provoking way. In his 2009 article, "The Big Debate: Can Food Be Serious Art?," Gopnik presents his thoughts in the form of an argument between two people with opposing opinions. He starts off with claims that food is not an art, and then responds to each claim (Gopnik, 2009). He begins the discussion with a claim that food has to be consumed and destroyed in order for someone to be able to enjoy it. Hence, it can be enjoyed for a brief period of time, unlike other forms of arts which are eternal or, at least, last much longer. He then responds by saying that music, too, lasts for a short time. The repeatability of music pieces is similar to making food from the same recipe over and over again (Gopnik, 2009). Next, he responds to the functionality of food, i.e. food serves a function more than representing an aesthetic value like other arts. He

says that architectural structures people consider as art pieces also serve a functional role, as in the case of the Taj Mahal and the Giza Pyramids. They serve as tombs (Gopnik, 2009). The claim that food does not go beyond immediate sensory pleasures is addressed next by Gopnik. He says food talks about history, culture, and ethnicity. So, one can enjoy food and at the same time experience the historical and cultural dimensions of it (Gopnik, 2009). What about the point that a small number of people actually enjoy food? He writes that an art shouldn't be measured by the size of its fans or followers, because, by doing so, we would not consider Bach's, Vermeer's or Mozart's works as art because few of their contemporaries heard most of what they wrote (Gopnik, 2009).

There is a sharp contrast between the established forms of art, such as music and painting, and the controversial form of art: food. As opposed to other forms of art, food evokes a more physical reaction. When you learn and listen to the music of Beethoven and Bach or learn the musical tones of the Classical era, these do not make you smarter, but one would not be able to live for long without food. Although this is probably true, it represents an extreme opinion, which is almost certainly affected by how humans existed in ancient history. Early in human history, man did not have mass production of produce. People did not have the machinery and equipment for hunting. They did not have the technology to store food for later use. Therefore, food was indeed an absolute necessity. It was impossible to think about it as a form of delight or socialization. Moreover, in our current time, the United Nations publishes that many people—over a billion—around the world are suffering from hunger (UNDESA, 2014). How would one expect these people to enjoy food the way people of affluence do, not to mention thinking of it as a form of art.



On the other end of the spectrum, some people may think of food as equivalent to other forms of art and actually exaggerate how much they follow this notion. They want you to look at and eat food while being focused on the moment and not distracted by opinions or history. They want you to look at every food differently because, according to them, it was prepared differently.

It appears that food will continue to be viewed by a number of people in the community of food scholars and chefs as a form of art. Evidence of this view is demonstrated in examples such as among the papers presented at the Art and Food Symposium, held August 24, 2012 at the Dunedin School of Art in Dunedin, New Zealand. The title of the symposium seems to indicate a view among many scholars regarding food's connection to art. Moreover, the event being hosted by an art school indicates a preference for the food as art viewpoint. One of the more apparent examples of food as art presented during the symposium was a paper regarding the subject of margarine sculpting. Margarine sculpting is presented as an "artisanal skill" (Hamilton, 2012). In another example of a paper presented at the symposium exploring the relationship between food and art, Langman (2012) discusses the development of food theater, in which food can be seen as narrative within the context of cultural artistic expression. In addition, Schmitt (2012) writes that contemporary public art increasingly includes themes of cooking projects and food art. According to Schmitt, food is being used by artists to engage in the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among both national and international communities (2012).

### **Food Presentation: Does It Matter?**

A working definition of food presentation is: "the art of modifying, processing, arranging, or decorating food to enhance its aesthetic appeal" (Food Presentation, 2015). I think

the answer to this question, *Food Presentation: Does It Matter?*, will defy the notion that food serves a functional role only and, as such, is not an art ("Does Food Have to Look Good to Taste Better?," 2013). When we have our daily meals, we love to have the table arranged well and the food to look as attractive as possible. This is despite the fact that the food will not be swallowed whole. It will be crunched and chopped into small pieces. So, why do we care to have the food we eat in a presentable way? Meal time is not merely a functional necessity; we do not eat only to survive. Food itself and mealtime have become so central in our lives that they represent important aspects of our life. The first human beings had scarcity of food. As a result, food was a survival issue. They could not have gathered and chatted around their food as we do now. In current days, food serves as a mode for social and family communication time, where people discuss and share their experiences and daily happenings. Similar to this in principle are the social occasions, such as marriage parties or funerals. People are expected to dress appropriately to attend these occasions; they need to look acceptable and presentable. In other words, they need to show aesthetics in the way they dress. Similarly, when you invite a guest for a meal, you present the food in the best way possible, i.e. aesthetically, to show hospitality and respect. If food only served a functional role, we would not have to arrange it in dishes to look eye-catching. We would not have bothered to buy expensive silverware and glassware to beautify our dining tables. Therefore, food serves many functions and roles in our lives, and to efficiently serve some roles, like socializing and conveying feelings of gratitude or love, it must be presented artistically and aesthetically. Bieder explores both sides of the "food as art or food as sustenance" debate, emphasizing the difference between food as art and food as sustenance might be found in how people choose to engage with food (2015). Bieder's emphasis on engagement seems to support the idea that if people choose to use food for the function of art,

then it can be considered art. Food's importance to art, performance and identity is further explored by Javanalidikorn (2011). Javanalidikorn notes that modern artists have consciously included food as material for art at the forefront of expressing new, unusual and experimental ideas; to such contemporary artists, food takes on significance as an "everyday" material, from which these artists hope to produce forms of art considered to be avant-garde.

Creating an aesthetic experience involves regional cuisine, gardens and landscapes, and ensuring that food inspires a sense of place and heritage that compliments the region (Harrington, 2004). We can see some examples from various cultures regarding how such an aesthetic is created. Marzipan, for example, is a dessert made of honey or sugar and almond meal, which can be formed into different shapes. Marzipan is enjoyed throughout the world, particularly in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia. In each region, marzipan is shaped to represent cultural traditions. In Germany and Scandinavia, marzipan is often formed into the shape of pigs, reflecting traditional farm culture. In Italy, marzipan is often shaped into fruit and painted with food colorings to make it appear more fruit-like, which seems to be a reflection of the fruit-growing tradition in the warmer Mediterranean climate.

Cultural food aesthetic traditions often involve significant time and labor, which signifies their importance to the culture. For example, a traditional kaiseki meal in Japan uses only what is considered the best ingredients and involves highly labor-intensive preparations (Tan, 2009). Moreover, a cultural food aesthetic tradition such as kaiseki can translate both history and cultural values. One form of kaiseki, known as "stone in the robe," comes from a tradition of cooking vegetarian food in Zen monasteries and from the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. The aesthetics of this form of kaiseki are used to translate the Japanese cultural values of using

resources and materials economically (as opposed to using lavish ingredients), in order not to show too much pride or to boast (Tan, 2009).

When food is presented aesthetically, it gives us a sensuous experience ("Does Food Have to Look Good to Taste Better?," 2013). Our senses will be tantalized to start experiencing beautiful feelings. I remember when I visited the Louvre Museum in Paris a few years ago I was focused on one main work of art: the Mona Lisa (or La Gioconda) by the Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci. My feelings were intense before I got to see it for the first time in reality. A similar feeling, possibly less intense, sweeps into our bodies as we take our seats to eat a meal (Does Food Have to Look Good to Taste Better?, 2013).

### **How to Present Food?**

Because of the biological and social role food uniquely plays, it's important to present it in an aesthetic manner to make it more appealing and more appetizing. The eye is the first, or the second after the nose, sensory organ to be tantalized by food. Therefore, it's critical to attractively present the food to please your family members or your guests and to encourage them to eat. The significance of food presentation is easily manifested with children. They can easily be turned away from eating a dish if it had "weird looking stuff" on the plate or bowl. They notice minute details and don't hesitate to tell you "I don't want to eat it because it looks weird" (Brandy, 2012). Often times, they would eat well if they try it, but this signifies how important the appearance is. For adults it's a little different because we tend to hide our feelings of repulsion so as not to hurt the feelings of the person who prepared the food. But we can be similarly turned off from eating because of how food looks.

Here are some tips of how to present food and to be a "true Picasso of food plating presentation" phrased by (Brandy, 2012):

1. Picture how final plate's presentation will be. Like a sculptor picturing his/her final sculpture work, cooking is an art that requires imagination.
2. Reduce the volume in each plate, regardless if it's a starter, main course, or dessert. Also, start presenting food by filling from the center of the plate to make a great food presentation.
3. Drain the food from its sauce before filling the plate. Draining the pieces of food on a cloth or paper towel prevents the sauce from spilling into other parts of the plate or out of the plate. The sauce should then be dispensed accurately according to the position of the main food in the plate.
4. Work on the height or width of the plate styling: although there is no rule for dressing a dish up, it is often recommended to place food from the center of the plate geometrically, while trying to enjoy the whole surface of the plate.
5. Add bits of color to add to the overall presentation: a pretty, styled plate is like a pretty picture, where colors are mixed harmoniously. Herbs and peppercorns are among the best to use for this purpose.
6. Pay attention to the tiniest details: such details may possibly make or break the beauty of a dish. Examples of these details are decorating with balsamic vinegar or applying a few drops of the sauce, by using a small spoon, to complement other contents. Also, sprinkles of colored spices, such as paprika or curcuma, on the white areas of the plate to create a balanced and colored look can enhance the look of a plate (Brandy, 2012).

One may object to paying much attention to the appearance or presentation at the expense of the content; in our case, content refers to the taste of the food. I agree, but, which is more

important: the presentation or the content? To answer this, let's check out two similar examples; a book and a painting art show. A book that has a glamorous title and a stunning cover will attract any person who likes reading, but if the content of the book is of such a low quality, the title and the cover then become of no value. Similarly, if the media advertise heavily for a painting art show and allure people to visit, then when they find less than average level of painting, they won't come again and they would think negatively of the media propaganda. These two examples illustrate how appearances can be deceiving when the content is irrelevant to the deceptive shining presentation. In the same way, if every effort is made to present the food in the best way possible, but its taste is not as good, probably no one would go beyond the first bite. This makes sense; the ultimate goal of preparing food is to eat it, not to enjoy how beautiful it looks. This definitely does not undermine the importance of presentation. I believe humans are created with a built-in desire to love and appreciate aesthetics. So, although we would still read our favorite book if the cover is damaged, we prefer to have it presented in a nice way if we had the choice. Likewise, we prefer to have the food we will eat presented aesthetically because food has more functions than just making us feel full. Bottom line, both content and presentation of food are important; they complement each other, and, for our daily eating, we like to have both of them.

Looking at this matter from another angle may make us consider the question: is food art or craft? Before we try to answer this question, let's try to differentiate between art and craft (Morelli, 2015). Actually, the distinction between the two terms is quite difficult and may prove irrational for some. It was around 1400 AD when people began to make distinction between the two terms; Renaissance Humanism began to form in Florence, Italy where people thought of remaking the Greek and Roman art works but with a focus on individual, rather than collective,

creativity. Their efforts paid off, and, within a generation, peoples' views of objects changed. This was culminated by the publication in 1550 of a book by Giorgio Vasari: *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*. Now, people changed how they thought of painting, sculpturing and architecture and considered them arts; they highly respected the people who excelled at them and called them artisans. Meanwhile, they thought less of other forms of arts like glassware, iron gates, jewelry and ceramics and called them minor or decorative crafts, whereas the people who made them as artisans. These changes made the distinction between arts and crafts solid in the Western culture (Morelli, 2015). The same distinction has never existed in other cultures around the world; arts and crafts were never set apart as two separate entities. In current museums and art books, we find collections of arts and crafts; this indicates that the distinction could be just imaginative (Morelli, 2015).

Still, based on the above perceived distinction, some continue to consider food a craft, because in order to call it an art, it has to be a creative and original creation, whereas food making is merely a craft, since the person making food just follows instructions of a recipe. A common analogy is used for this distinction; architects who design buildings are artisans and what they do is an art, whereas laborers who do the actual building process are craftsmen and what they do is a craft. However, the same analogy does not apply to musicians and poets; they, too, follow a similar convention. Most poems are written with rhymes, but what do we call poets who have the same rhymes? Artisans or craftsmen? What about those musicians who play an already composed piece? I think this discredits them their right of performing a form of art (Morelli, 2015).

So, where does this leave us in terms of food being an art or a craft? If we consider a chef an artist or a craftsman based on the originality of her / his work, how would we solve the same

issue for talented portrait painters? They make “copy portraits” accurately resembling certain people just like a chef making “copy dishes” of someone else’s recipe. This leads us to divide food into two types of art: the recipe, which is equivalent to music composition or architecture design, and making the dish, which is equivalent to playing music or making a paper design into a building. This division surely entails a distinction between the two. We have far less people who come up with original recipes than those who do the cooking (Hite, 2012).

Moreover, if food is a craft, then why do we have culinary arts? This discipline is taught in colleges and universities around the world. It involves high levels of technique, creativity and skill, not to mention patience and concentration. It also requires years of practicing. But as we have seen, artworks are in general more expressive than food (Hite, 2012). They have more profound qualities, histories, and meanings. Food can represent social, historic and cultural meanings to some extent, but nowhere in detail and sophistication as artworks. Therefore, food should not be considered a major art; but rather, a minor form of art.



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## **Chapter 3: Essay 2 - Food Design**

### **Abstract**

Food design is essential to creating positive emotions and meaningful memories surrounding the aesthetics, pleasure and satisfaction of food experiences. The importance of food design transcends the food industry, being of particular importance to the worldwide tourism industry. A more developed understanding of the sub-disciplines of food design enables both the home cook and the professional chef to provide optimal dining experiences. Food styling, a component of these sub-disciplines, remains controversial to some consumers. Despite such controversies, content and appearance can be balanced relative to one another. Food styling remains an important and essential element of food design.

### **What is Food Design? Why Does It Matter?**

Food design researcher and consultant Francesca Zampollo (2013) notes, “The difference between what is food design and what is not food design is design” (p. 5). So, what is design? Robin Mathew, as referred to by Zampollo (2013), defines it as “where science and art break even” (p. 6). I like this definition, and it reminds me of Smart phones, especially those which combine outstanding technology with eye-catching stylish designs. I often look at my iPhone for a few moments and admire its sleek design. At the same time, it offers me endless useful applications, which make it difficult to imagine my life with it.

Heskett (2002) offers a more sophisticated definition of design, “[T]he deliberate and reasoned shaping and making of our environment in ways that satisfy our needs and give meaning to our lives” (p. 7). I find this definition very applicable to food design because I live these meanings whenever I have the mood and time to prepare food with a meaningful design. I say “mood and time” because adding designs, which “satisfy our needs and give meaning to our

lives” takes time and true dedication. I remember on one occasion, we had my parents visiting us for dinner, I was so excited to invite them to my home shortly after my husband and I moved together. I spent the night before and the whole next day to prepare the delicious food they like. My dad is a meticulous person. He is very detailed and loves to have the best in everything. I remember I used to arrange the dining table when I was living with my parents. He would comment on many things which I did not think they mattered, but he was positive in his criticism.

That way of teaching made me pay close attention to details and helped make me a better cook. So, I made our traditional dish, Kabsa, but I took double the cooking time to decorate the food and the table. On the main dish, I added lightly fried peeled almonds. I used white bowls for the vegetable salad and orange bowls for yoghurt. I put a knife, a fork and a spoon next to their plates and aligned the salad and yoghurt each on one side. I also put on a new rosy table cloth. My parents, and my husband, just loved how everything looked so perfectly attractive. They also liked the food itself. That food on that day did satisfy my father’s, and in fact all of us, need to combine delicious taste and attractive appearance in food. It also gave a more lovely meaning to getting together that day.

We eat food every day, but we can attach meanings to it. We can revive beautiful memories through food design. I remember very well when my mom told me what kind of sweet she and my dad like the best, so, I made it on that day. Not only this, I put it in their favorite bowl, the French Victoria Arcopal. Food design creates positive emotions (Desmet, 2003). Food is a product, and it can bring forth different types of emotions. By recalling that banquet, I am certain its design created aesthetic and social emotions.

According to Zampollo (2013), food design has six sub-disciplines, briefly outlined here. First, designs about food. Here food itself is not used. Rather, these food designs are used to deliver a message. Examples include making a fruit or vegetable picture on a t-shirt to promote healthy eating (Zampollo, 2013). Second, food space or interior design; this includes the design of the spaces used for preparing or eating food, like kitchens and restaurants (Zampollo, 2013). Third, eating design; it's how to make designs of food-related material, like food containers, fit a certain setting (Zampollo, 2013). A good example is the popcorn containers when one goes to the movies. Fourth, design for food; the shapes of food are used to design the tools used in food handling and cooking; like making spoons with carrot-like handles. Fifth, food product design is the art of making same food product have different designs. The different shapes of spaghetti are good examples. The sixth sub-discipline is my favorite and is what comes to mind when we say food design. It is design with food. Here, we use food to make shapes and symbols to create the attachment and emotion we want (Zampollo, 2013). Making a heart-shaped marriage anniversary cake is an excellent example.

### **Food is a Pleasure!**

Early in recorded history, people started to give importance to good taste as a type of pleasure, giving rise to the importance of food design (A Brief Cultural History of Taste, n.d.). Of course most people, up till now, have primarily viewed food as a source of sustenance. But those, for whom food availability was never an issue, began to enjoy food in a different way. The nobility in Middle Ages Europe, in an attempt to distinguish their class status from the rest of the society, enjoyed food and ate plenty of food extravagantly (A Brief Cultural History of Taste, n.d.).

The importance of food design further increased when business became prosperous in China during the 11th century, restaurants emerged to serve traders who travelled long distances (A Brief Cultural History of Taste, n.d.). In modern days, restaurants serve two functions. The first is to provide food to satisfy hunger. Here, design, atmosphere and appearance don't matter that much because people have take-out food or dine-in quickly and leave. The other function is to provide a venue for socialization, restaurants are places for people to meet, socialize, express feelings, discuss business deals, propose for marriage etc. Such restaurants must be attractive in design, hospitality, variety of cuisine and atmosphere. As such, these restaurants usually charge more due to the service along with the food. People pay more because they appreciate what is offered beyond food serving per se. As farming methods improved, food became more available. Cookbooks were printed in the fifteenth century. This meant that more and more people could enjoy the taste of different foods, even the foods which were exclusively for the nobility (A Brief Cultural History of Taste, n.d.). This, along with the spread of colonization and importation of spices and new foods especially from China and India, made the elite look for new ways to enjoy food in a way that was different from the common person. They got precious spices like ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, saffron and pepper (A Brief Cultural History of Taste, n.d.). This history has led to the important role food design plays in today's world.

### **Food Tourism**

Do you think about the food and cuisine of a destination you are visiting? Is gastronomy one of the things you consider when choosing a touristic attraction to visit? I certainly do. In fact, I am not the only one. According to research, eating in restaurants is the second most favorite activity for tourists visiting the United States. Also, food is considered to be an enjoyable activity of considerable interest to American tourists visiting other countries (Paula, 2012). The literature

classifies motives affecting food tourism into internal and external stimuli (Paula, 2012). The internal stimuli arise from the person's psychological, social and ego-centric desires (Paula, 2012). For example, I like Chinese food, and if I go to Brazil, I will still be attracted to go to a Chinese restaurant. The external stimuli, however, comes from the surroundings, like cultural influences, peer influences and food festivals (Paula, 2012). So, if I travel to India and the Indian culture attracts me to try Indian food, I may give it a try. Or if my friend traveling with me encourages me to do so, I could do it. This supports the assertion that food indeed is an integral part of tourism.

To illustrate the importance of food on tourism, the Mediterranean diet of Spain, Greece, Italy and Morocco was included in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010 (Paula, 2012). So, yes, it matters to tourists and therefore must matter for businesses related to tourism. People will most probably visit a destination for the second, and maybe third, time because they liked the gastronomy in that destination. They were satisfied. Likewise, people may become repelled from visiting again if they had less than satisfactory experiences with the gastronomy. But satisfaction is a relative term, and people are different when it comes to what makes them satisfied with gastronomy (Paula, 2012). For some, taste matters the most, which is also a relative thing, others may give priority to quantity, cost-effectiveness, originality etc. Regardless of what satisfies tourists, gastronomy remains one of the most important attractions for them. In a survey of American tourists, 88.2% stated that gastronomy "defines the brand and image of their destination" (Paula, 2012). This makes gastronomy a viable option for tourism industry to invest in order to attract tourists.

Food tourism comprises a paradox (Paula, 2012), but one that makes sense. At tourist attractions, one often finds that local cultural foods are promoted in a way designed to encourage



further tourist attraction. Yet, the impact of globalization is also seen almost in all tourist destinations (Paula, 2012). A friend of mine went to Paris. She loved the place but did not like the French cuisine, so she looked for other choices. It was not hard to find McDonalds, a Lebanese restaurant, a Chinese restaurant, etc. The good point about this is that it gives tourists the choice to try the local or go for the international gastronomy.

### **Pre-prepared vs. Homemade Food**

Most people have a strong belief that homemade food is healthier and more delicious than pre-prepared food. I hold that belief too. Still, each has its advantages and disadvantages, and people make their choices based on their personal priorities. The following table compares the two:

**Table 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Homemade versus Pre-prepared Food.**

	<b>Homemade</b>	<b>Pre-Prepared</b>
<b>Creativity</b>	A lot of room	Limited
<b>Ingredients</b>	Can be changed	Can't be changed
<b>Are you aware of what it contains?</b>	Yes	Mostly yes, but some ingredients may be unknown to you
<b>Cost</b>	Usually less costly	Usually more costly
<b>Nutritional value</b>	Better, you can control amount of fat and sodium	Nutritious but usually contains more fat and sodium
<b>Preparation time</b>	Long	Short
<b>Taste consistency</b>	Depends on how strictly one follows recipe steps	Consistent

<b>Need for cleaning</b>	A lot	A little
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**Source:** (Downing, 2011) (pg. 2).

If one’s priority is healthiness, wholesomeness, enjoying cooking and views a meal as a hearty gift to the family, then she/he will choose homemade food. I am from this group. On the other hand, if one’s priority is saving time or she/he does not know how to or does not like to cook, then, the pre-prepared food is a more convenient choice.

Americans, like many other people, have increasing levels of weight problems, including obesity and chronic diseases related to nutrition. The table below shows that the first three causes of death in the U.S. are nutrition-related (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). Processed food contains much sodium, which is linked to high blood pressure and chronic heart failure (Dietary Guidelines, 2010). Potassium is known to counteract some of the effects of sodium (Dietary Guidelines, 2010). Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend a maximum of 2300mg of sodium a day, which should be reduced to 1,500mg a day for people with high blood pressure, those of African descent and middle-aged to old people (Dietary Guidelines, 2010).

**Table 2. Leading Causes of Death in the United States.**

<b>Disease/Cause of Death</b>	<b>Nutrition Related</b>	<b>Other</b>
Heart Disease	X	
Cancer	X	
Stroke	X	
Respiratory Diseases		X
Accidents		X
Diabetes	X	

Influenza/Pneumonia		X
Alzheimer's Disease		X
Kidney Disease		X
Blood Poisoning		X

Source: Centers for Disease Control. Leading Causes of Death in the United States. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64\\_02.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_02.pdf). Accessed October 2015.

### **Food Styling**

The term food styling reminds me of fashion styling, which could be viewed either positively or negatively. People who think negatively about fashion and styling believe that they use men and women with certain attributes, like height, weight and look, which are not even close to ordinary people. Therefore, they look extraordinarily attractive and allure people to buy them, but in reality people don't look the same as the models. On the other hand, people who do not object to fashion and styling believe that it is a chance to show people how to dress well and look better by offering them good examples of real people wearing real clothes. Food styling does not seem to be different. Chef Kim Kissling outlines the difference between many people's perceptions and reality, according to him (Kissling, 2015).

Kissling (2015) simply defines food styling as presenting food in a beautiful way. He explains the misconception that many people have regarding food styling and what it actually means. People think that food styling is all about faking how food looks (Kissling, 2015). Kissling does not deny that there are people who could do that, but this should not be mixed for true food styling where art is blended with flavor, aroma and color to make an attractive, appetizing dish. I personally have watched a documentary about people who are called food stylists. What I watched actually contradicts what Kissling is saying. In that program, food

stylists were making food from real and fake stuff to come up with a product that looks “too good to be true” in order to shoot it and use it in advertising. One lady made hamburgers for a fast food company to use in commercials. It did look so perfect, but so far away from the real burger that restaurants make. At that moment, I was struck by the truth. The advertisements we see on TV and on the street billboards are nothing but fake images created by food stylists. I have never seen a meal that looks even 70% of what is displayed in ads. Consumer Reports highlighted the difference between food that was pictured on the box and the food which came in the box via highly detailed photographs (Picture vs. Product, 2012). As the Consumer Reports’ photographs indicate, the food we buy in grocery stores has its packages with pictures of food that is so different from what you get when you cook it or microwave it yourself at home.

Despite the controversy, I tend to agree with Kissling’s assertion that food styling can have a positive benefit. The primary question of whether or not food styling is beneficial depends on the qualifications of the person who does the styling and the purpose (Kissling, 2015). Although anyone can do food styling, this does not necessarily mean anyone is qualified or experienced. Nevertheless, if sustenance that is made to look beautiful is also edible and healthy, then we should not mind food styling. Food styling will likely continue to be an important component of food design.

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## **Chapter 4: Essay 3 - Table Design**

### **Abstract**

The dining room table is considered by many families throughout the world to be the most important area of the home. The meal table plays a central role in family life, socialization and entertaining friends and extended family members. Families often extend much time in purchasing a table. In this essay, we expand the concept of table design beyond simply the architectural style of the table itself, to include all of the design elements a host utilizes on the table surface in order to create a satisfying and engaging meal experience. Table design can be considered a holistic form of art by the host who takes into account not only choice of table, but also uses standards and best practices to make numerous detail-oriented decisions, such as style of tablecloth, types of dinnerware, serveware and stemware, and overall table surface organization. From the point of view of the host, table design is the creativity of designing a satisfying and engaging dining room table meal experience.

### **Table Materials**

Like any piece of furniture, a dining room table can have many different materials; wood, glass, and marble are among the most famous (How to Set a Formal Dinner Table, 2010). Also, there are different varieties within each material. The lifestyle one has is an important determinant of the table's material; a family with kids better not have a wooden table that is dark in color, like mahogany; dark wooden tables don't hide the spills, watermarks and scratches kids usually make. Instead of wood, polished marble would be a better choice. If one really loves to have a wooden table, a more rustic piece remains a feasible choice (Dagenhard, 2012).

## **Table Styles**

Dining tables come in many styles, but the following are the most popular:

1. Traditional oval dining room tables are classic and beautiful; usually, their size can be adjusted depending on the number of people.
2. Round Pedestal: these are easy to sit at because there are no legs, just a single pedestal in the middle.
3. Rustic Modern: this style is usually rectangular, and has become popular over the last few years. Another very popular look right now is the mix of wood and metal.
4. Trestle tables: they are made of two or three trestles that make up the table base and support a long piece that makes up the table surface.
5. Farmhouse style: as the name implies, they're relaxed and rustic and could be found in farmhouse kitchens and dining rooms. They're typically made of pine and have a very laid-back feeling to them (Dagenhard, 2012).

## **Table Size**

The table size and height are other important considerations. Round tables are favored for closer interaction and conversation, but they take more visual space for the same number of seats than a rectangular table.<sup>2</sup> The size of the table depends on how many people are expected to use it; a round table of a 48" diameter accommodates four seats, a 54" diameter table accommodates six and a 60" accommodates eight seats. A standard size rectangular table of eight seats is about 36" x 72" (Dagenhard, 2012).

## **Setting a Dinner Table**



This depends on the situation or the occasion the table will be used for; if it's a regular occasion, a simple set up should be enough. For formal occasions and important guests visit, a more planned set up is warranted; in such occasions, we need to pay attention to the smallest detail, including the tablecloth, the napkins, silverware, dishware, type food, juice and, even, appetizers and desserts.

A dining table should have cloth napkins and the following types of tableware (Table 3):

**Table 3. Types of Tableware (Tablecloths, 2015).**

<b>Forks</b>	<b>Spoons</b>	<b>Knives</b>	<b>Cups</b>	<b>Bowls</b>	<b>Plates</b>
Salad	Soup	Table	Tea	Soup	Dinner
Dinner	Table	Butter	Juice		Salad
Dessert	Dessert		Water		Tea saucer
					Bread

The dinner plates should be placed in the center in front of the guest's chair; also, each dinner plate should be aligned with the one across from it. Relative to the edge of the table, the dinner plates should be placed a thumb knuckle away. Salad plates, which are naturally smaller than dinner plates, should be put in the middle of the dinner plate (Dagenhard, 2012).

### **Table Coverings**

Tablecloths are optional for dining tables, but they surely offer a number of important added values; they add a nice decoration to the dining table and dining room at the same time; it protects the table from scratches and reduces noise associated with moving the plates and silverware; finally, tablecloths give more space on the dining table compared to placemats (Tablecloths, 2015). Choosing the right tablecloth is equally important; there are five design

elements to be considered in a tablecloth, dominance, visual weight, color, texture and pattern (Tablecloths, 2015).

Dominance refers to exquisitely show the design elements of the dining glassware, silverware and décor of the dining room in general; visual weight relates to the proportion of the dining table to the dining room and how a tablecloth makes a connection between both; a tablecloth can deliver visual weight if it's made of large woven patterns and this works best in a large dining room; in small rooms, lighter color tablecloths with airy patterns would be more suitable (Tablecloths, 2015). Color of a tablecloth depends on the occasion; for formal occasions, the white, ivory, pastel and ecru are usually the preferred colors; the napkin color is preferably similar to the tablecloth. For less formal or informal occasions, the color of the tablecloth could be any shade or contrast (Tablecloths, 2015). Likewise, the texture of a tablecloth depends on the occasion; for formal dining occasions, in which porcelain, silver or crystal finishes are used, a tablecloth woven with satin sheen would be more suitable; informal dinners are not as demanding; texture ranges from smooth to coarse. The last element to consider is the pattern of a tablecloth, and again it depends on the type of dinner; in formal dinners, patterns should be simple and small in order not to distract guests from the tableware or food. In informal dinners, bold and decorative patterns maybe used, but the design and patterns of the walls should be kept in mind when selecting a tablecloth pattern (Tablecloths, 2015).

Other aspects related to the tablecloth is the length of overhang, which is the distance between the top of the table and the hem of the tablecloth; this depends on the size of the table and the fabric weight; long tables require long overhangs and small tables require short drops (Tablecloths, 2015). The type of occasion, again, plays a role in selecting the overhang of a tablecloth; formal dinners usually have longer drop (10 – 15 inches) compared to informal

dinners (10 inches); also, the weight of the fabric affects this selection; for light weight fabric, it'd be better to increase the drop to fix it better on the table (Tablecloths, 2015).

The last attribute of a tablecloth I'd like to cover is its shape; selecting a shape depends on the shape of the dining table. For round tables, round tablecloth works for those without leaves, whereas oval tablecloths are suitable for those with leaves; square tables without leaves require square tablecloths, and square tables with leaves need oblong tablecloths. The last shape is rectangular tables; they require oblong tablecloths regardless if they are with or without leaves (Tablecloths, 2015).

## **Dinnerware**

When one enters the dining room, the first thing, after the table, his/her eyes look at is the dinnerware. Dinnerware is purchased to be used on daily basis or for special occasions; the former is more subject to scratches and breaks and is usually not preferred for use for guests, especially important guests. Different materials are used in making dinnerware; the hardest ceramic is porcelain and the strongest is bone china. Other varieties have decreasing strengths, starting with stoneware, semiporcelain, creamware and majolica (Drachenfels, 2000). Regardless of what strength is chosen, the dinnerware should be both dishwasher- and microwave-safe. White is the most preferred color for dinnerware; not only is it less expensive, it's easier to match with different colors and patterns in the dining room. A little shade of one or two colors could be added to white dinnerware for those who like more colors. Precious metal, silver, gold or platinum, ornamentation is especially suited for special occasions; they add elegance to the dinnerware, but prevent using them in microwave and hand-washing is recommended to keep them in a good shape (Drachenfels, 2000). Another safety concern arises when using lead-glazed dinnerware; the lead could leach into food when in contact with acidic food like lemon, orange,

vinegar, salt, eggs and mayonnaise. Serious health hazards are associated with lead ingestion. A good quality lead-glazed dinnerware should be purchased if this type of ornamentation is desired. Here in the U.S., lead glazing is controlled by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (Drachenfels, 2000).

Dinnerware comes in three main patterns or designs, romantic, classic and modern. Romantic patterns are suggestive of living things, like birds, flowers and fruits. Classic patterns are based on historical designs, like lines and geometrical shapes. The third pattern is the modern pattern, which is abstract in concept and depicts geometric motifs that mix well with furniture with straight line designs. An important point to consider when choosing a design is the matching with other elements on the table; simple dinnerware goes well with ornate tablecloth and plate mats. Similarly, ornate dinnerware suit simple surrounding elements (Drachenfels, 2000).

The number of pieces in a dinnerware differs from a set to another depending on how many people will use them. A starter set is made up of twenty pieces comprising four dinner plates, four salad plates, four cups and saucers and four cereal bowls. Serve set has forty five pieces of eight dinner plates, salad plates, cups and saucers, cereal bowls and four pieces of differing sizes including medium-size platter, open vegetable bowl, covered sugar bowl and creamer. Some dinnerware sets are sold as open stock, which means separate pieces may be purchased separately. An issue with open stock sets is that the manufacturer may discontinue making them; this makes replacing a lost or broken piece difficult (Drachenfels, 2000).

### **Serveware**

Serveware is from the Latin *servire*, "to serve," and the Anglo-Saxon *waru*, meaning "special merchandise." It encompasses bowls, beverage pots, compotes, nut bowls, platters, salt

cellars and salt shakers, pepper shakers and pepper mills, salvers, sauceboats and gravy boats (Tablecloths, 2015). Serving bowls could be either shallow or deep in shape. Shallow serving bowls, with a broad, flat base and sloping sides, are used to serve firm food, such as fruit, and rolls. Deep serving bowls, on the other hand, are good for soft foods, such as rice, pasta (Tablecloths, 2015).

Beverage pots come in different shapes to serve tea, coffee, chocolate and juice. To secure the lid tightly, these pots are made with a lip on the inside, and a spout that defined well to avoid drips. For hot drinks serving, handles are made with insulator rings to protect from the heat (Tablecloths, 2015).

Platter is from the French word plat for "flat;" it's a shallow dish made in different (round, oval, or rectangular) shapes. It is primarily used to serve meat and fish dishes prepared without sauce. Platters come in sizes from 9 to 24 inches; the 24-inch platter is a big size to big servings like a roast turkey. Smaller platters, 16 – 18 inches are suitable to serve hot or cold meat to approximately six to eight people, whereas the 14-inch platter is good for individual servings. The 9-inch platter is selected for condiments and relishes (Tablecloths, 2015).

Trays are used to present the main course, salads, cheese, and dessert in formal, large dinners. Also, they are used to transport a coffee service from the kitchen to another room. In informal dinners, besides the above, trays can be used to serve dry food, like bread, cookies, or sandwiches or to clear the table (Tablecloths, 2015).

### **Table Setting and Serving Utensils**

Serving utensils serve many functions; they can be used to cut, scoop, grasp, spread, and transfer food from plates, trays, platters, and bowls. I selected to briefly describe plates, knives and spoons.

Plates are made in twelve sizes for table use; service plate, dinner plate, luncheon plate, round salad plate, crescent salad plate, fish plate, dessert plate, cheese plate, fruit plate, tea plate, bread-and-butter plate, and a fruit saucer. Each kind is briefly described below (Tablecloths, 2015).

The service plate is the largest plate; they are 11 to 14 inches across. A service plate is laid in the center of the placemat before the guest comes to the table. At a formal table, the service plate decorates the cover and the rim should frame the appetizer plate with a surround of no less than one inch. Also, food is never placed directly on a service plate. Rather, the service plate is a base on which other plates are placed on top of it. At an informal meal, the service plate is optional, where dinner plates maybe used as service plates to hold a first course. Service plates have other names, buffet plate, charger plate, cover plate, lay plate, and place plate (Tablecloths, 2015).

The dinner plate is used the most. It is used to serve the main course at all meals, formal and informal; dinner plates measure from 10 to 11 inches across (Tablecloths, 2015). Luncheon plate is lighter at 9 to 9.5 inches in diameter; it is not essential for occasions. The round salad plate is either large, 8 to 8.5 inches, or small, 7 to 7.5 inches. In a formal occasion, the salad plate is put before the guest after the main course is taken away. At an informal meal, salad is presented before the main course, as a side dish with the main course (Tablecloths, 2015).

The following plates are considered specialized and are not part of a dinnerware set and used at formal and informal meals; fish, dessert, tea, cheese, fruit plates (Tablecloths, 2015). The fish plate is a specialized plate at 8 to 9 inches in diameter. Dessert plates are lavishly decorated. They measure 7.25 to 8.5 inches in diameter. Cheese plates are decorated in a cheese pattern; they are 7.25 inches in diameter. Tea plates hold the teacup; they are about 7 to 7.5 inches in

diameter. Fruit plates, decorated in a fruit pattern, are about 6.25 to 8 inches in diameter (Tablecloths, 2015).

The bread-and-butter plate is used to separate bread and butter from other foods. It is usually not used in a formal dinner table because the menu provides sufficient taste and texture, but in restaurants, bread is often provided before and between courses. On the other hand, bread and butter are served at informal meals (Tablecloths, 2015). Fruit saucer or dish is a small shallow dish about 4 to 6 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep. It is provided only at informal meals (Tablecloths, 2015).

Tableware knives are available in a many shapes and designs and serve different jobs on the dining table; they include dinner, steak, luncheon, fish, dessert, fruit, butter, cake and carving knives (Tablecloths, 2015). Dinner Knife is the longest knife in a set of flatware. It is used to cut and push food and is put on the table at all meals, regardless if formal or informal. The dinner knife is made in two sizes: place size and continental size; the place size measures around  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length whereas the continental size is about  $9\frac{3}{4}$  inches long. A dinner knife is used to cut an extra-large salad leaf, such as a piece of romaine or a thick wedge of lettuce (Tablecloths, 2015).

The steak knife is not part of a set of flatware; it's approximately  $8\frac{1}{4}$  to 9 inches long and has a sharp tip and a serrated edge to cut thick portions of meat. At formal dinners, a steak knife is not provided if meat is served roasted, in which case it is easy to cut it with a regular dinner knife (Tablecloths, 2015). The luncheon knife is 8 to  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, which balances the proportions of the luncheon plate; luncheon knives are not commonly used; the dinner knife replaces it (Tablecloths, 2015).

Fish knives are about  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches long; it's a specialized shape not included as part of a flatware set. They have a wide blade with a dull edge and a tip made with a notched point to separate the skeleton from the body and lift the bones onto a plate. They are used in both formal and informal meals (Tablecloths, 2015).

The dessert knife measures 8 inches long and has a narrow blade, to segment soft desserts, and a rounded tip to cut hard desserts. It's considered a specialized utensil that is not part of a flatware set. The fruit knife, as the name implies, is used to cut and peel fruit at the table in formal and informal dining; it's approximately  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches to  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches long. It has a pointed tip and a narrow, straight blade that is slightly curved; sometimes the blade is serrated. Similar to the dessert knife, the fruit knife is a specialized utensil and is not part of a flatware set (Tablecloths, 2015).

The butter spreader knife is 5 to 6 inches long; it's the smallest in a set of flatware. Its tip of the blade is rounded and some are slightly wider at the tip. Its use depends if the occasion is formal or informal; at formal dinners, a butter spreader is not needed because many courses are served. However, at informal meals, where fewer courses are served, bread and butter are provided and a butter spreader is used (Tablecloths, 2015).

Cake knife is longer at approximately  $9\frac{1}{2}$  to 14 inches in length; it's made with a long blade that reduces the number of strokes needed to cut food with a delicate texture. Carving knife, part of the carving set, has a blade 11 to 15 inches long to reduce the number of strokes required to make carved thick cuts of meat, vegetables, and fruit. Large carving knife usually has steel with an abrasive blade about 14 inches long; the steel is used to sharpen the knife. On the other hand, the small carving knife is approximately  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches long (Tablecloths, 2015).



Spoons are used to sip, stir, and sup. I have included the fourteen types arranged in a descending size (Tablecloths, 2015) in Table 4:

**Table 4. Spoon Types by Descending Size. (Tablecloths, 2015).**

<b>Largest</b>	<b>Smallest</b>
Iced-Beverage	Ice-Cream
Oval Soup	Citrus
Dessert	Bouillon
Place	After-Dinner Coffee
Cream Soup	Chocolate
Teaspoon	Demitasse
Five O'Clock	Salt

The iced-beverage spoon is used to stir sugar in cold beverages, such as iced tea or iced coffee; it's the longest spoon in a set of flatware, a utensil made with a small bowl and a long handle, approximately 7 to 10 inches in length. It is used for informal dining only (Tablecloths, 2015). The oval soup spoon is used to eat soup, namely, soup made with particles of solid food, such as meat, vegetables, grains, and pasta; it's similar in size and shape to a tablespoon, but the bowl is smaller and tapers to a tip, and the handle is shorter. The length of the oval soup spoon is 5¾ to 8¼ inches. Using an oval soup spoon is different in formal and informal meals; at a formal dinner, soup is served in a soup plate and the oval soup spoon is the only spoon put on the table. On the other hand, at an informal meal, the oval soup spoon is used to eat any food presented in a large, shallow soup bowl, such as chili, stew and dessert (Tablecloths, 2015). Dessert spoon is midway in length between the tablespoon and teaspoon, approximately 7 to 7¼ inches long; it is

oval in shape and holds approximately two teaspoons of food. The dessert spoon is used in formal and informal meals (Tablecloths, 2015). Place spoon is larger than a teaspoon but smaller than a tablespoon; it's used originally to sip cream soup and eat dessert. Its length is 6½ to 7½ inches (Tablecloths, 2015). Cream soup spoon is 6 inches long and is made with a round bowl to fit the shape of the cream soup bowl. It has a longer to reach into the depth of the cream soup bowl. At a formal dinner the cream soup spoon is not used, because cream soup is considered rich and heavy to start a multi-course meal as in formal meals. Anyways, meals with a simpler menu, like informal meals, a first course of cream soup is served with a cream soup spoon (Tablecloths, 2015).

Teaspoon measures approximately 5½ to 6¼ inches in length and is used only in informal dining to stir hot beverages or eat solid food. Five o'clock spoon is a specialized spoon found in older sets of silver' it's made for a time when afternoon tea was taken at five o'clock, it is slightly shorter than a teaspoon at 5 ¼ to 5 ½ inches long (Tablecloths, 2015). Ice-cream spoon, or ice-cream scoop, is 5 inches in length and made with a wide shallow bowl to get a generous bite. It is used at informal meals only to eat frozen dessert served on a plate. Citrus spoon, also known as a grapefruit spoon, orange spoon, and fruit spoon has an elongated bowl and a pointed tip, a shape used to eat segmented fruit, such as a grapefruit or an orange. It's 5½ to 6½ inches long and has plain or serrated edge (Tablecloths, 2015). Bouillon spoon looks like a cream soup spoon, but the bowl is smaller and the handle is shorter at 5 to 5 ½ inches long. It is used at light meals, such as formal and informal luncheon. After-dinner coffee spoon is approximately 4½ to 5 inches long, suitable for a coffee cup. It is used only for informal dining (Tablecloths, 2015). Chocolate spoon is used when hot chocolate is served; chocolate is usually not served at formal meals because it has a rich flavor. Another type of spoon, demitasse spoon, also known as a

mocha spoon, is used to stir coffee made with an equal amount of hot chocolate; it's 3¾ to 4½ inches long. Finally, a salt spoon is placed in a salt cellar before and after use. Salt cellars can be used instead, but are reserved for formal dinners (Tablecloths, 2015).

## **Stemware**

A stemware is a drinking vessel made with a bowl resting on a stem. Stemware is used to serve cool drinks like iced tea, water and wine. The purpose of designing stemware with a stem is similar in principle to a cup handle; the stem protects the cool contents from becoming warm because of touching the bowl housing it with hands. Stemware evolved over many years; after levying a tax on the weight of glass in England in 1745, the plain horizontal base for stemware was adopted. It replaced the thick rim which was designed to protect the base from cracking (Drachenfels, 2000).

Three shapes are available for the bowl part of the stemware; the bucket-shaped bowl resembles a bucket with horizontal base and vertical sides. The tulip-shaped bowl, as the name implies, looks like a tulip, with rounded base and inwardly curved walls. The third shape is the flared bowl which is similar to a trumpet; it's long and narrow with a pointed rounded base and straight or slightly flared sides. Glassware were a form of luxury in the Middle Ages; as glass making developed and became more widespread, different shapes and sizes were made for different types of beverages. Today, large-bowl stemware is used for non-alcoholic beverages such as water and iced tea, whereas medium-size stemware is used for low alcohol beverages such as wine. Small-bowl stemware is suitable moderate to high alcoholic drinks like aperitifs and dessert wine; on the other hand, tiny-bowl stemware is reserved for drinks high in alcohol (Drachenfels, 2000).

Aperitif glass is small since this beverage is high in alcohol and should be served as an appetizer before meals; 2 to 3 ounces are usually poured. Water goblet is the largest stemware; water is served in water goblet glass because it's drunk during the whole meal. Another glass is more modern is used for an American twentieth-century drink; it's iced-tea glass. Richard Blechynden invented iced tea in 1904 in Louisiana; he was employed by an Indian tea company to promote tea, which was only served hot until then, in Louisiana, but people were not interested in a hot beverage in the hot state of Louisiana. Although he was desperate, he still tried to pour the tea on ice and serve it in a tall glass. Blechynden did invent an American tradition which still lives on. Iced-tea glass is long and thin and is served at informal occasions (Drachenfels, 2000).

Wine stemware is probably the most sophisticated; the reason is that the shape of the stemware affects the taste of wine in a significant way. This is due to the anatomy of the taste buds on the tongue. Sweet taste is sensed on the tip of the tongue; acidic taste is sensed on the sides, whereas salty taste is sensed on the front and sides of the tongue. Finally, bitterness is sensed on the top sides and back side of the tongue. To savor the sweet taste of a wine type, trumpet-wine glass, which has an outward flared rim, is used; also, to balance the fruity and acidic flavors of a certain wine, a tulip-shaped glass, with an inward-curved rim, is more suitable. Another aspect of wine glasses is related to the alcohol content; dessert wine glasses are smaller than those of white wine because of the higher alcohol in the former. Brandy snifter is probably one of the glasses whose size does not relate to how much beverage in has; brandy has 40% alcohol and only 1-2 ounces are served. An important feature of brandy snifter is the inward curving of the rim to deliver the heady bouquet. Also, brandy is better served warm or at room

temperature hence the stem is short so the stemware bowl is cradled in the palm of the hand to maintain the warmth (Drachenfels, 2000).

In sum, table design relates to food aesthetics by enhancing the overall experience of the dining area. The meticulousness by which a designer improves the appearance of the dining room table provides the basis for aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable eating. The competent designer will utilize knowledge of every element of table design, including style of tablecloth, types of dinnerware, serveware and stemware, and overall table surface organization, to provide the best tools to enable ease of eating and to improve the environmental aesthetic by which food is perceived.

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## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Food is an indispensable commodity in our lives. The great progress mankind has achieved in all aspects of life had much influence on how we view and perceive food. Food has evolved from a mere necessity to a sophisticated component of social, cultural and religious occasions. Popular culture and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is significant value to the aesthetics of food. However, much of the academic literature seems to focus on the economic value of food production, population, the restaurant industry, and tourism. This examination of food aesthetics and design, culture, and tradition, as reported in the essays, supports the premise that food aesthetics may impact people's food choices. These essays also support the need for further empirical study of the importance of food aesthetics.

Western culture in particular has made a historical distinction between art and crafts. Due to such traditions and cultural ways of thinking, food is often placed into the craft category. However, cultures throughout the world do not necessarily make identical distinctions between art and craft. Thus, we can recognize the possibility that such a distinction could be viewed as somewhat arbitrary. A wider, more global viewpoint which includes an increased understanding of the difference between art and craft is essential to understanding food aesthetics and presentation, as well as issues surrounding art and food. Regardless of whether or not we consider food a form of art or as a simple craft, the outside appearance, i.e. aesthetics, of food affects our taste and preference for different types of dishes.

Food presentation enhances the aesthetics of food and is a key to understanding food as art. Due to the fact that people take the time to present food in a manner that is eye-catching and because people gather to enjoy food together, we may reach an understanding that the artistic creativity by which food is prepared and presented is necessary to our social and cultural

connections and an important component of our lives as human beings. From this point of view, an understanding of art and the aesthetics of food is necessary for presenting food in a way that meets not only our physical needs, but also our emotional, psychological and social needs.

Despite food's cultural value, an argument can be made that art such as music, sculpture or painting have the capability of expressing more than can be expressed with food, despite the best food presentation. From this point of view, the more established, traditional art forms may have special qualities that travel farther into our humanity. Thus, we might say that the more traditional forms of art such as architecture, the dome of a temple, etc., may have more profound, spiritual or philosophical meanings and qualities. Nevertheless, food aesthetics and presentation provides social, historic and cultural meaning.

While these essays seem to suggest that food should be considered a minor form of art (as opposed to a major form of art), we also recognize that people will most likely continue to have different opinions about the relative importance of food content vs. its appearance and what value that may grant food among other forms of art. Eventually, it may come down to what everybody sees differently from others; after all, "the beauty is in the eye of the beholder".

Food design has a fundamental role to play in people's expectations, enjoyment and satisfaction of food experiences. Food design provides people with the opportunity to attach meaning, not only to food experiences, but also to family life, as well as their social and cultural connections. Thus, we could say food design helps people to experience meaning and fulfillment in their lives as a whole.

The social, psychological and emotional aspects of food design, meaning, food as pleasure, has implications for both individual and public health. Historically, both food and food design has been associated with socio economic status. With the rise of public health concerns



surrounding food in developed countries, particularly, the overweight and obesity epidemic in the United States, more study is needed to better understand how food design could create or influence more positive social and health outcomes in the modern world. Food design plays an important role in people's food choices, influencing how, what, when and where people eat. As discussed in the issue of pre-prepared vs. home food, food design can have a critical impact on the health and well-being of individuals, families and society. As more people in developed countries eat pre-prepared food (which, for example, may increase salt content in the blood beyond recommended daily allowances) or in establishments outside the home, food design is likely to have an increasing impact on society as a whole, both in terms of healthcare and economics. More education may be required to better educate the public on the sub-disciplines of food design and how these sub-disciplines affect the lives of consumers' and families: designs about food, food space or interior design, eating design, design for food, food product design, and design with food. New food design education programs could be developed in public schools, universities and/or by government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States. Pre-school or elementary school aged children, who are exposed to Food Styling in the media, may be able to understand basic elements of food design. More study may be required to determine which concepts might be more easily understood by young children and how food design programs could be implemented throughout secondary schooling.

Food design is likely to continue to have an increasing impact on industries outside of the food industry. Much like restaurants and grocery stores, the tourism industry worldwide depends on food design and satisfactory food experiences to encourage people to return to tourist destinations. As more people travel, food design will most likely continue to have a powerful influence on local, regional and national economies. Content and appearance are equally

important when food design is considered. It seems difficult to think of food without combining these two integral features. The difference among people's acceptance or non-acceptance of Food Styling seems to be related to how significant each feature (content and appearance) is, relative to the other. Considering all the elements of food design together as a whole, food styling, despite its controversies, has an important role in the food industry and tourism. Thus, a balanced view of food styling which includes both content and appearance and does not overstress one while disregarding the other is preferable to discounting food styling altogether.

The dining table is central to every home, serving a multitude of functions, such as facilitating social interaction, hospitality, etc., in addition to its basic function of serving meals. Thus, dining tables have received a significant amount of attention in terms of design. One needs to be mindful of the many factors which have an effect on the way dining tables should be designed. These factors include the materials, shape and size of dining tables.

In addition to the table itself, a number of other factors regarding what lies on the table's surface play a key role in whether or not family, friends and guests enjoy a satisfying experience. The decision of whether a meal will be formal or casual may be the most important decision of table design. The ability by which a host can be prepared (for example, knowing ahead of time whether or not a particular meal is to be formal or informal) and pay attention to detail is critical to each element of table design. A decision to have a formal meal, or a meal for a special occasion, increases the complexity and the number of decisions made by a host.

Table design could likely also be considered to encompass not only table choice, but also choosing and properly caring for dinnerware, flatware, and glassware. This would include proper maintenance of equipment and quick repair or replacement of any broken or damaged pieces. Such maintenance is important not only for mealtime pleasure, but also for safety. For example,

any chipped glassware should be discarded and replaced, since even a small chip could cause someone to be injured or cut. Expanding the concept of table design beyond simply the architectural style of the table itself, to include all of the design elements a host utilizes on the table surface is fundamental. From this point of view, table design can be considered a holistic form of art-design by the host who takes into account not only choice of table, but also uses proper standards and best practices to make numerous detail-oriented decisions, such as style of tablecloth, types of dinnerware, serveware and stemware, safety, and overall table surface organization.

As a holistic practice, table design is the creativity of designing a satisfying and engaging dining room table meal experience. A dining room table which is well-planned, properly set and organized, and appealing to the eye and the senses, with all the choices of design elements complementing each other, says “welcome” to both family members and guests. Whatever the occasion might be, making the dining table attractive and hospitable is as important as the food which is served.

It is likely that the majority of research will continue to focus on the economic value of food production, population, the restaurant industry, and tourism. However, understanding the value and role of food aesthetics and design, culture, and tradition, and how this impacts people’s food choices, is likely to become increasingly important. As mentioned previously, these essays support further empirical study of the importance of food aesthetics.

Suggestions for future study might involve research into psychological and neurological foundations that might affect how designers perceive a food aesthetic. We can substantiate the existence of a food aesthetic through the widespread examples of food design evident in various cultures throughout the world. Possible mechanisms by which food can serve as a design

medium that could result in art might be found in the same psychological and neurological foundations which have given rise to art. Such study could examine food design from the psychological and neurological points of view and further explore common design elements which provide aesthetic appeal and which exist in other art mediums (i.e. symmetry, color, shape, etc.).