

Note: Written for Catalogue on Moving Site Project 2005-2006

Vectoral Generosities:

spurse

Movements by Way of Preamble: This work on developing a provisional restaurant began as a way to test a series of ideas in regards to contemporary tactics of how one could temporarily occupy urban locations¹. The idea: how could one develop a commercial space in a highly trafficked location that could take advantage of all the excesses in the urban environment? Excesses in property -- vacant storefronts; excesses in materials -- free supplies -- plywood, metal, scaffolding old desks etc.; excesses in labor -- work; excesses in ideas -- etc... We imagined this to test a tactically provisional restaurant drifting and surfing the urban landscape -- gleaned space, materials, energies, ideas, times, and new forms of becoming. A provisional restaurant became our way of moving through these questions. With each cultural institution we requested not to be located in their galleries, we worked with them to locate a storefront that would be free for a month, and upon arrival we began to make linkages to assemble foods, cooking equipment, materials to build the furniture, interested groups and individuals, etc. This brief chronology below unfolds as a type of recipe which remains close to the development of each of the provisional restaurants as a strategic methodology.

Properties: Begin by imagining pausing. Temporary, transitional, strategic pauses. Pause through using the logic of property leasing. Where are the gaps? What is vacant? Who is waiting for a location to gain value? What areas do people traverse? Imagine location as an event -- settling down for one or two months at a time? Why? It is free². the circulations have changed³. Pauses slowly become stopings.

Arrival: Now you are somewhere. A global somewhere. Somewhere within a global movements of goods, ideas, people, events -- systems stream through this spot -- slowing down and simultaneously speeding up⁴. Develop ways in which to sense these

¹ Let us briefly assume experiments in foraging for food, new ways of eating, experiments in cooking, talking around a table, the politics of hunger, and politics of food production are central to this project and become everywhere and on every level active.

² Nothing is free. A circulations of ownerships. A circulation of enclosures. But we simply ask -- what can be done? And for how long can or should it be sustained?

³ This work assumes a world composed of forces and the circulation of goods, ideas, peoples and events etc. -- a type of vectoral globe.

⁴ Site specific art is specific to the degree it is sensitive to coagulations of global distributions as they traverse the enmeshing of a site-becoming. A site is not a place where one can draw borders -- the so called "lure of the local" is a globally active event (as an example think of how the weather moves across the globe making at distinct points local weather systems. Acid rain falls in the arctic from detroit. Genetic materials naturally drift across species via bacteria and viruses...).

-- interact with them -- talk, barter, buy, trade, take, find, give away -- move through things -- let things move you⁵.

Linkages: Collection -- gleaning⁶: establish a network -- establish a series of networks. Connect with economies on all scales. (We linked up, or tried to link up, with *Whole Foods*, *Food Not Bombs*, corner stores, *The Bitter Mellon Council of North America*, local diners, local soup kitchens, people we met in passing, people who dropped in as we were working, animals, the weather, community organizations, urban foragers, mushroom experts, the homeless, artists, potters, dancers, restaurants, chefs, friends, bakeries, wine shops and many others)⁷. Everything involves a vast multiplicity of linkages -- one needs to be open to these - with as few presuppositions as possible⁸.

Assembly: For walks, for cooking, for eating. What assembles is a potentiality of becoming - food, community, politics, practices, urban movements⁹.

Walk: Using a score, a set of simple directives derived in situ (immanent), a walk begins. One engages the world receiving each turn or interaction as a potential linkage between you and whatever. On the walk one receives recipes, food items, cooking ware, a walking partner, a gift, a shortcut, a haircut, a meander, all the matter (and more) to make a meal, including prep cooks and patrons¹⁰. Develop further walks for living.

Research: What is research without practice? How does one become community if not by engaging it fully embodied, immersed in it, blind to it, sensing it. Or simply put, where does a meal come from¹¹? But more complexly, what are its ingredients, how

⁵ Surrender. Blindness. Stupidity. Naivety. These are not so bad.

⁶ A caution (for artists and others): in making linkages -- collaborating -- evaluate capabilities not statements -- prepare and activate the development of linkages: are the organizations you are collaborating with structurally capable of keeping their word? Change requires structural commitments. The structure of many "not for profit" artist spaces is simply to keep themselves afloat month to month. Evaluate your role in this: are you structurally part of their identity production? What are their degrees of freedom? Not-for-profit is an illusion -- who is getting paid? Who has a salary? How do artist fees appear? Start moving -- a web of forces shifts with each of your movements. Make linkages worth having. Leave others aside.

⁷ Always return calls.

⁸ In New Haven we operated exclusively out of our restaurant -- working with a number of groups (such as Food not Bombs). In Bellows Falls we hosted movie nights, cooked in local restaurants and at the local soup kitchen, as well as hosted local organic farms and other groups. In Cambridge we did much less (see footnote above).

⁹ Action is, perhaps, always a question of assembling -- material forces, biological forces (and creatures -- after all in regards to food where would we be without bacteria?), social forces etc. (without seeing these as clearly separate).

¹⁰ The recipes, foods, ways of serving etc. all come from walking -- but not directly -- there is a process of transposition that happens (not translation). The meaning of statements (what we are told) is left behind and statements become a site of immanent connections (e.g. the number of words in an answer could become the number of courses served).

¹¹ In all the parts of this endeavor J. Walker Tufts played the key role. As a collective we worked on all components of this project. But without Walker acting at a remarkable level as a gleaner, chef, mediator, ambassador, and conversationalist etc. little would have happened. A rare artist.

does one prepare it, what are the histories involved with its invention, its presentation (public)? What is a place? Investigate it by moving in it, share with it, feel it, taste it, listen for its utterances and hiccups, look for its openings, where it moves, where it hides, where it rest, where it acts freely to produce an exchange, where it is generous¹².

Preparation: A simple proposition: make a list of all possible cooking methods, make a list of all ingredients gleaned, develop a system of proportions, develop a way to enumerate courses, dishes and relate all of the previous to these. Now you have a complex problem. solve it -- with one rule -- make it beautiful¹³.

Dining: A number of days of the week you prepare: walk, glean, research, design -- allow whomever shows up to participate. then open the restaurant as a restaurant on as many days as is possible. Set your hours -- say 6pm is when you will begin -- serve whomever shows up (seat around one table) the first course -- and as the night progresses people will be served starting with whatever course they arrive at -- sometimes there will be more than 20 courses. The whomever has arrived interacts as the whatever has been gleaned is cooked into that which will be eaten.

Dispersal: Let everything flow outward. It is really just moving across us. someone will find it. whatever. whomever. a community to come.

¹² we have not forgotten the Pharmakon. *It Gives* as Aquinas would say.

¹³ Experimental cooking: what are all the possible ways of cooking and eating? What is possible? Please send us ideas and we will respond in kind: spurse@hotmail.com.

Credits:

This was a project based on the geographies of generosity of waste, excess, and other forms of gifts. Many people, and organizations helped us with great kindness and unstinting aid -- people who walked in off the street, restaurants, cafes, corner stores, bakeries, all were magnificent in their willingness to help. Nothing would have been possible without all the things left on corners, in garbage bins and dumpsters, piled beside houses and overflowing from construction sites. Then people who had an extra stove or microwave, people interested in the politics of food, potters, other food related artist -- most who acted anonymously and who remain anonymous came to collaborate. We would like to thank those we can remember by name and all those who we remember without name. In New Haven Denise Markonish was a great facilitator, Leslie Kuo a great artist and designer who helped us in many ways, food not bombs and their wonderful coordinator Diana Goldberg helped us in rethinking many of our own practices, food from the earth, James Aevaloitis did much of the preliminary research, Hayne Bayless came by with pottery, the grand son of Joe Luis helped on an almost daily basis, many resaurants helped us: Atticus Bakery and Books, Thai Pan Asian, Bill at the Copper Kitchen began the whole project in a remarkable manner, as well as JMart Asian Market and Mediterranea . In Bellows Falls Robert McBride was a generous host allowing us to use his house for over a month, the food distribution center, the recycling center, all the restaurants (Oona's Restaurant, Verandah Porche, and Gail from Word of Mouth catering were gererous in many ways including letting us host events in their restaurants, plus others), and the regional farms were key participants. In Cambridge we experienced many difficulties, which made this a better project and we thank these difficulties, as well as MIT for the space, the National Bitter Melon Council (Hiroko Kikuchi, Andi Sutton, Jeremy Lui and others) who were a model and inspiration to us, all of the volunteers: Sophie Lacombe, Misa Saburi, and especially Sabrina Small and Ayumi Miyachi (who designed and built when no one else was willing), Daniel Berry for his interest, Susan Doherty who hosted us in Cambridge with consideration, and at the right moment a blind eye, Wendy Jacob for her frequent visits, Catherine D'ignazio for sage advise and support, this leg would have been a lot harder without the help of Heather and Brain Overby (both for housing and the rebuilding of the space), the studio of Mags Harris and all those who simply dropped in with supplies. And ultimately to all those who came to visit, eat, talk, exchange -- collaborate on a public moment-- and finally all to the wastes of this world (we are all in your debt). We thank you and it all profusely.