
BOMPAS & PARR'S

**IMMINENT
FUTURE OF FOOD**

2018

A grid of colorful sticky notes (yellow, pink, red, teal) with dried flower petals (yellow, red, pink) on a white background. The text is centered over the grid.

**Going beyond the regular trends reports
to draw back the curtain
on what you'll be eating shortly**



This report, the first of an annual commentary based on insights gleaned from across the Bompas & Parr team, looks into the imminent future of food, but with a crucial difference compared to other trends reports released at this time of year. In contrast to those that seek to identify trends, which by definition have already begun to form in some way, however nascent, we have also sought to imagine the unrealized future. Some of the themes developed in this report have not yet happened.

Nevertheless, this is a future that we at Bompas & Parr – the studio is now in its tenth year – can feel in our collective gut. It is a future that is based on an appreciation of the worlds in which our commercial, cultural, artistic and governmental clients operate. And it is a future that speaks to the next generation of insatiable food lovers, ever on the look-out for the next big thing, and to stay ahead of the curve rather than jump on the bandwagon.

A report that goes deeper

Why go beyond trends reports?

This sort of report is increasingly relevant. The speed of the food cycle is increasing exponentially. Regular trends reports may have more qualitative and quantitative data, but by the time they are published, the trend is probably over. You certainly won't gain much traction from it, should you explore your own variant. While the glitter cappuccinos of two weeks ago may make the write-up, those wishing to appear innovative should steer away – any subsequent version will look derivative.

Instead, we hope this report serves to inspire others to some original thought that interpret these findings and predictions in their own way – that it becomes a goad to creativity in its own right and can help shape the zeitgeist in a more meaningful way rather than being more simply a journal of record.

Bompas & Parr is adept at identifying themes and realising projects long before they've even been featured in trends reports.

The studio, founded in 2007 as a jelly company before evolving first into a catering company and then into a full-service experience design agency focusing on food and the senses, regularly advises the world's best trend spotters and forecasters including The Future Laboratory, WGSN, Protein and JWT Intelligence on what is coming next. With our Imminent Future report you get it straight from the coal face of creativity.

The areas detailed here are themes we are excited about and will be exploring creatively in the next year. If you want to be a genuine innovator rather than an early adopter we welcome you to join us.

Guts and glory



Past successes at fortune telling with food

Bompas & Parr has a considerable track record of culinary innovation, year-on-year delivering projects that go on to define industries.

Culinary innovation:

B&P was an early player in the New Food scene in the UK, defining the culinary renaissance of the last decade:

- UK's first food design with the Architectural Jelly of 2008
- London's first food pop-ups with Alcoholic Architecture in 2009 - Dessert served for the first outing of the UK's first supper club

Food influencers:

B&P gifted the UK's first food bloggers with their first brand-backed gift Multisensory approach:

- Realised installations like the Multisensory Fireworks for a live audience of 250,000 before the senses became a focus

Age of experience:

B&P created countless experiential installations such as Mercedes Drive Thru for London Fashion Week before experience was identified as a desirable and essential part of the marketing mix

Continuing innovation:

B&P continues to deliver world-firsts that impact on global food culture.

- This year B&P realised the world's first DNA-based dinner
- The British Museum of Food is the world's first cultural institution dedicated to food and drink.



Alcoholic Architecture



Architectural Jellies



Mercedes Drive-thru



Multi-sensory Fireworks



British Museum of Food

The psychology of trends and future forecasting

To be able to define future trends we need to look at the core psychology of trends and how following them is derived from our very survival instincts. Social Psychology is defined, in the seminal Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychology, as “the scientific study of how we think about, influence, and relate to one another.” We are social beings.

Most of us communicate with others every day. In fact, we spend 70-80% of our waking hours in some form of communication. The actual breakdown, according to Psychology Today, is that, on average, we spend 30% of the day speaking and 45% listening.

The passive intake of information is even greater: we take in content-driven imagery during 70% of waking hours in the form of social media, billboards, bus ads, TV ads, pop-ups etc. The average Brit is exposed to between 5,000-12,000 individual pieces of visual content, each with their own messaging. We are particularly susceptible to visual messaging, both in terms of creating and consuming it: in 2017, 1.2 trillion photos were taken and shared on social media.

So how are we then able to classify and discern this immense influx of visual content? The answer lies in evolution and how it has wired our brain. We subconsciously gravitate towards content and opinions we associate with the largest group of people.

To show how new trends catch on and disseminate, we look at the classic Stanford study led by Prof. Lee Ross in 1977, known as the “Eat at Joe’s” study. Participants were asked if they would be willing to walk around the campus for 30 minutes wearing a large sandwich board bearing the message “Eat at Joe’s”. The results illustrated the group mentality: amongst those who agreed to wear the board, most (62%) believed that others would as well. Amongst those who refused, only a third felt others would agree to wear the board – they could not imagine that the group had a different opinion to them.

Regardless of their choice, all participants believed that the group would make the same choices – or rather, that their opinion would naturally and instinctively align to that of the others.

We use the decisions of others as heuristic – mental shortcuts that help us navigate our lives and sift through the flood of imagery and messaging. Dr. Robert Cialdini, in his book Influence, uses the example of advertisers using the words “fastest-growing” or “best-selling”. He concludes that advertisers don’t have to persuade us that a product is good, they need only to say that others think it’s good.



PREDICTION I
AI Dinner Party

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AI Dinner Party

When kitchen and service processes are automated and mechanised, the results are often poor and only achieved at great expense. Though they have a place in industrial food production, robots and artificial intelligence have yet to find much of a role in the hospitality industry at large.

The Bionic Bar unveiled by Royal Caribbean on Quantum of the Sea in 2014, uses 30 spirits and 21 mixers, producing two drinks a minute, making up to 1,000 drinks a day for the cost of \$4m. By all accounts, the drinks made by the regular bar-staff are better by far.

In 2018, however, will finally see robotics and AI enter the hospitality arena in a meaningful way. Starship Technologies' slow-moving pavement droids can already be seen on London pavements delivering food from Just Eat. But what we at B&P are really excited about is the potential for the first AI dinner party!

Ever played the fantasy dinner party game where you list your ultimate (or horror) guest list – from Marquis de Sade to Donald Trump, PT Barnum and Charlie Sheen? Provided your dream guests have published enough in the public domain through their writing or tweeting it will be possible to have their AI avatar to dinner.

A bot of the desired diner is created, and a likely looking actor recruited to play their

Photo credit: Bompas & Parr

role. A discreet ear-bud allows the actor to interact naturally with the dinner party while being fed lines in response to the conversation provided by the AI.

Bompas & Parr has already begun working with bots from a social media perspective, and our next step is planning our dream dinner party with Dickens and Shakespeare.

See also ***Mixed Reality Dining***



PREDICTION 2

Fasting is the new feasting

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Everyone loves a new diet for the New Year. The bookshelves of Bompas & Parr's own Soyer Memorial Library are packed with diet books that range from the moderately sensible to the absurd. Particular favourites include *What Would Jesus Eat* and *Slim While you Sleep*, tagline: *'The magical way to lose weight without really trying'*.

Following the year that 'clean eating' was exposed as disingenuous, founded on bad science and even dangerous to both physical and mental health, what can we look forward to? Perhaps a sensitive reappraisal of diet that doesn't call for the wholesale exclusion of entire food groups? With the ongoing rise of veganism (currently 1% of Americans though some polls put numbers as high as 6% of population) this seems unlikely.

Some in Silicon Valley are pushing their restrictive diets still further – temporarily forswearing all food for periods of two to eight days. A recent Guardian article says that proponents don't describe this as dieting but 'bio-hacking'. Acolytes claim weight loss (of course), mood stability and increased productivity. There is growing evidence for increased longevity (in mice) but also clear health risks if not practised in the correct way. Without the right minerals such as sodium, magnesium and potassium there is a danger of heart failure.

As restrictive dieting becomes the ultimate form of social signaling, and perceived productivity benefits align with ever-busier lives, sit back and wait for your friends to tell you about their special new fast. Is this a bad thing? If you take a global-historical view, this is not as new. Most major religions have specific times of the year set aside for fasting – Lent for Christians, Ramadan for Muslims and certain days of the month and week for Hindus depending on personal beliefs and favorite deities. Perhaps the recent Silicon Valley efflorescence is the secular version of these more ancient practices.

Our verdict: the sins we omit are worse than the sins we commit. This said, we'll be hosting a series of special meals for committed fasters to break their fast together. Whether or not the science of productivity and longevity stacks up, there are guaranteed to be networking benefits.



PREDICTION 3

Africa is the new Asia

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Africa is the new Asia

Asia has been the focus of much recent culinary and gastronomic innovation, characterised by the adoption of its ingredients, flavours and cooking styles by restaurants, chefs, bartenders across the globe outside Asia in everything from high-end fine dining down through premium mainstream offers. Asian street food culture has been adopted by many high street chains and fast food, and its ubiquity in supermarkets means it has become *de rigeur* in homes across the globe too.

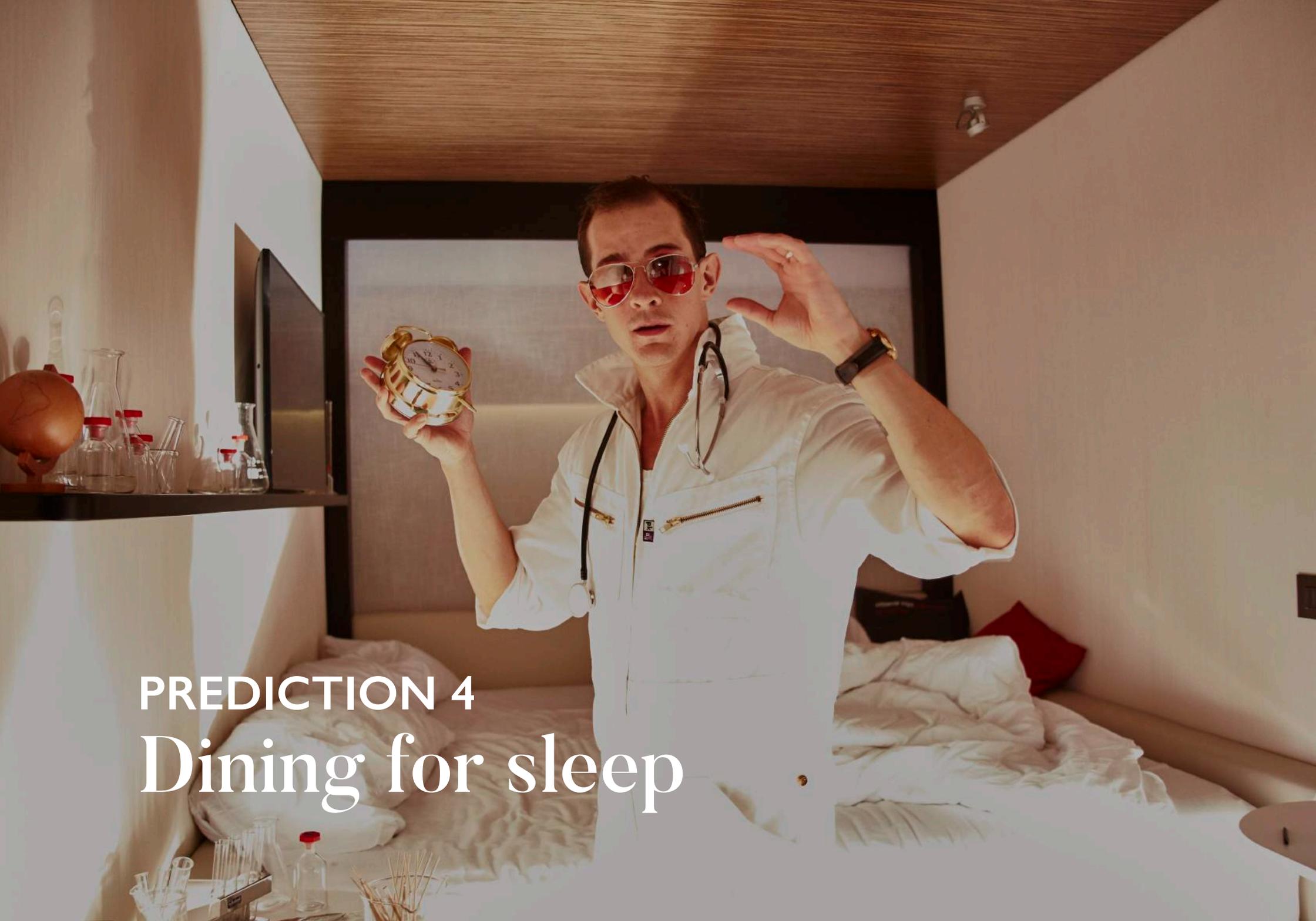
While there is still room for further extension of Asian cooking styles, we are feeling close to saturation point and looking to the next big inspiration for flavour, ingredients, dining styles and occasionality.

Africa is the next logical flashpoint for this inspiration. It is arguably the main remaining world food culture left to be adopted, adapted and commercialised. The very fact we still talk about 'African' culinary culture is itself a sign of our collective naivety about the continent in the way we lump together that the huge array of gastronomic opportunities of its 54 countries. A veil lies over the wealth of potential ingredients and cooking styles, tastes and forms of hospitality. Its combination of local, national and international influences through colonisation (European and Asian) and trade with Asia, the Mediterranean and the Middle East positions Africa as the spiritual home of fusion cookery as well as life itself.

Where there is wider knowledge about African cooking, it is limited to pockets of north African (mostly Moroccan) culture and South Africa, generic in tone or novelty food items. The continent's leading chefs are largely unknown outside their home markets. This lack of knowledge represents a huge opportunity to mirror the journey Asian food has so successfully embarked on.

Economically, the International Monetary Fund forecasts that Africa will be the second- fastest growing region in the world between 2016 and 2020. As this economic power develops, with world focus turning to the continent, it's clear its cultural – and culinary – reach will also become far more influential.

Bompas & Parr has already worked on African-focused projects for European commercial clients which reveal starkly different flavours, consumer expectations and notions of hospitality. At our bar Alcoholic Architecture we also hosted sell-out special events incorporating Ghanaian bitters in cocktails, revealing a profound curiosity on the part of consumers for new tastes and flavours. This is just the start.



PREDICTION 4
Dining for sleep

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Dining for sleep

What you eat has long been recognised for its ability to sabotage a good night's sleep, and the value of sleep has also been acknowledged for its role in weight loss through hormonal balance. The next stage is to develop eating and drinking practices that are actively designed to help you sleep.

As an extension of the old wife's tale that a glass of warm milk helps you sleep, followed by the scientific confirmation of the presence of the sleep-inducing amino acid tryptophan in milk, other food groups have been similarly identified for their role in releasing serotonin and melatonin neurotransmitters that are conducive to sleep.

The next step is to develop dishes and diets that deliberately target sleep as their core output. To some extent this is a matter of 'connecting the dots' of existing scientific knowledge, but around that exist further opportunities to commercialise sleep as an end in itself. Hotels have hitherto been largely focused on the premiumisation of life experience and conveyance of conscious (awake) luxury, with sleep a serendipitous end point. But this is a different opportunity: one where sleep is at the centre with all surrounding ways and means designed to upgrade the time when you are unconscious.

And in the same way that food is recognised for its behavioural influence during waking life, food and drink can also be at the centre of nightlife.

With cultural commentators identifying clean sleeping as the 'next frontier' in wellness, despite the discrediting of clean eating it's clear that consciously enhancing the world of sleep is a prevailing trend.

The studio previously encouraged consumers to explore sleep and the wonders of lucid dreaming at a launch event for citizenM's newest London hotel, including the world's smallest museum. Next steps in the field is a research project exploring new sources of melatonin – not least through the incorporation of new-found African flavours (see **Africa is the new Asia**).



PREDICTION 5

Mixed reality dining

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Mixed reality dining

Virtual reality has been marked by a recent spike in interest, as apps, games and commercial endeavours across industry sectors leverage a technology that has reached a relative sophistication and economy over earlier versions.

However, VR is largely a lonely business embarked on by individuals that disconnects them from the real world and replaces it with pixels only. Augmented reality has begun to mix the digital and real worlds but by putting a virtual 'layer' over life, but the experience is still characterised by a sharp divide between the two from an experiential point of view – and often still mitigates against group activity.

But it is developments in augmented reality that will normalise mixed reality. As augmented reality author Robert Scoble says: *"I'm highly focused on mixed reality (MR) because I see that it's going to be huge. It'll be much more important than VR."*

In turn, we see opportunities for the dining landscape in particular to act as a draw that compels the convergence of existing technological streams – embedded microelectronics in crockery and glassware, projection technologies, responsive sound environments and more broadly digital content that's coupled to the taste and aroma of the food and drink on the table – and use the latest multi-sensory scientific understanding to create ever-more immersive eating and drinking experiences.

Dining occasions offer an opportunity for a space to constantly respond to users in real-time in a way which is far more conducive to 'normal' dining formats – where groups of people interact collectively. This next wave of augmented reality will draw people together in contrast to the way it has so far separated them while the reduction in size of wearable technology will encourage greater take-up and fuel demand for scenarios where it can be effective.

Bompas & Parr has already used wearable technology to incentivise movement of guests at an event from one area to another, to signal availability of particular food and drink to select guests, and we've also worked to conceptualise facial recognition technology within retail hospitality settings.

The next stages for us will seek to combine wearable tech within a responsive environment where the food doesn't just look and taste great, but talks back to you – the cow in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy made real – coupled with an entertaining theatrical narrative where the set changes constantly.



PREDICTION 6

GMOs for creativity

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GMOs for creativity

Technology is improving so quickly that the possibilities of altering DNA in microorganisms has unlocked an endless amount of creative possibilities for designers, genetically modifying not only our foods but also our fragrances and medicines. With biotech companies like Ginkgo Bioworks tinkering with these tiny organisms, they are in turn producing traits or ingredients that we desire the most, and in some cases, simply did not exist before.

The implication of using genetically modified organisms can be plainly stated: imagine if it were possible to alter the molecules in your food to mimic impossible or perhaps extinct foods that you would otherwise be unable to sample. Would you eat the meat of an extinct woolly mammoth? Sample off-planet bacteria in a safe way? Even taste human flesh?

Using GMOs in the creative process will be an emerging trend that future designers will tap into and lead the discussion on. The possibilities with food alteration will not only change our diets, but more importantly how our foods are produced: instead of manufacturing products, we will be growing our future food, and it'll be biologists making them.

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PREDICTION 7
Dine at mine

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Dine at mine

Recent years have been redefining the economic landscape, moving from traditional models to a peer-to-peer economy. The “access economy”, as it has been called by the Harvard Business Review, already accounts for more than 5% of the economy in sectors that it covers (food, transport, housing, start-up funding).

From hitching a ride via Uber rather than queuing for a taxi; renting a room through AirBnB rather than a hotel chain, our day-to-day experience of the access economy will expand dramatically. For food, this will see us opt out of hosting our own meals and selecting a willing host from an app. The food and leisure sectors will shift from traditional restaurant and bar formats to peer-to-peer experiences.

Creativity and hostmanship will become open source and increasingly competitive, prompting ever-changing, always-new and perpetually exciting ways of where we should eat. We will live in a world where the city and its inhabitants will be completely open and an incredible experience or meal can be found around every corner. Much more than restaurants that pop-up in people’s living rooms and supperclubs, today’s peer-to-peer technological platforms will enable and extend the model exponentially.

An independent report into the sharing economy, commissioned by the UK government and published in November 2014, noted that sharing models now exist at all stages of food production and distribution, with benefits for sustainable living and improved connections between individuals and communities². With lots of models trying to take off, it is a natural next step that a sharing platform like AirBnB can work as a financially liable model.

Having already hosted dinners in the Bompas & Parr studio (in fact our workshop), such as Feast of Flowers and the recent Future of Christmas dinner, we have already led the way in the sharing economy. Join us for dinner in our home in 2018 – and we look forward to dinner at yours.

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378291/bis-14-1227-unlocking-the-sharing-economy-an-independent-review.pdf

A photograph of two men in a kitchen. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue sweater with white polka dots and is looking down at a green pitcher. The man on the right is wearing a colorful, patterned shirt and a white apron, and is also looking down at the pitcher. They are both holding the pitcher, and a large, thick plume of white foam is being poured out from the spout. The background shows a kitchen counter with various items, including a knife, a glass, and some bottles.

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About Bompas & Parr



Thank You

For further details please contact:
info@bompasandparr.com

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