



**THE FRAME OF REFERENCE STUDIO:
ANALOGY AS A STRATEGY TOWARD CREATING IDENTITY**

**PROJECT 02
SLOW SPACE:**

Material is spent light
Louis Kahn

Food represents a distinct aspect of our individual and social lives, a system of our existence. Beyond the irrefutable fact of necessity, food has numerous dimensions of experience and meaning that overlap and density. This is not unlike architecture which is another system that exceeds oversimplified definition based on need alone. However obvious, it is important to observe that these systems come together in time and in space to constitute what we take for granted as the totality of our experiences. In the best instances these systems, these dimensions of our existence, weave together into a fabric that seems to attain an idealized state. Physical design of space and form alone can not pretend to achieve this. On the contrary the architecture of space requires consideration of many levels and dimensions of our experience in order to be multilayered and rich.

Food is not derived from notational representation but through material processes. Architecture on the other hand has become largely notational. Representations are necessary in the process of searching, researching, and realizing architecture. Through out this project, you are asked to consider architecture and space through the frame work of food as phenomenon and eating as an experience. Food as an idea should become a source for thinking, understanding and making. Food as an idea can be our lens, our frame of reference, a contextual background.

PROBLEM:

What is the space of the food? Is it the space of the individual, space of the table or the space of the room? How do these realms of space interact with each other? That food and space are and need to be interwoven seems obvious enough. Yet modernity in many instances creates disjunctions between place and food (the vending machine, the meal in the car or airplane for example). Our interest is to explore and establish this necessary connection.

In this second project, instead of individual building design, the studio will collaboratively design/construct the architecture of a dining experience. The studio will be divided into two groups and each group will construct a dining space. Similar to the first project which required the design of a unit of dwelling, this project requires the consideration of a unit of space (although much smaller and more personal) which can be imagined to be multiplied, repeated and varied.

As the project progresses, as teams and individuals you will have to think about cross cultural ideas, examples, cuisines and dining experiences to develop your concepts. It is expected that the process of research, reflection and discussions will begin to suggest concrete ideas for not only the micro-environment but also provide clues and narratives for the larger spatial context; that is the nature of the larger space that these proposals expect. The class will be divided into two groups of 9 students and each group will collaborate and build/design an installation, a "unit of space":

Table (3 students)

Seating (for two) (3 Students)

A privacy device Lighting/ media (screen wall or some such thing) (3 Students)

The groups will also be required to design a menu card and other the graphics that is part of the spatial experience

PROCESS:

Simultaneously we will begin two steps that begin the research and development of concepts:

1. MATERIAL MANIPULATIONS: If the immediacy of food and its reality (you can see, smell, touch, hear and taste and it) is our inspiration, it follows that we engage materials as they are. Also, given that the final product will be actual construction to full scale, it is imperative that you start exploring actual materials and material combinations. Only when you "play" with a material can you sense its nature, its limits and potentials and discipline your imagination within this context.

Due at start of class on Wednesday: Select 2 materials and create 2 experiments each (larger than 6" at least in one dimension) that explore the conditions of connection and materiality. **Do not use any glue.**

As in the first sketch problem of this semester, remember that elements that we use of in fabrication have material and formal properties that exert influence on us. Thus working with sheet steel versus angles versus rods all have varying potentials

2. WRITING: Write an essay (minimum 2 pages, double spacing and 10 point font or less) on one interpretive aspect of food. This will help develop a base of ideas that will feed into the project. You can add images. The essay can draw from significant personal experiences and it should yield interesting interpretations. Topics will be assigned through random drawing from the following list:

Food as (necessity and):

Performance art. Visual art. Production. Excess. Experience. Forms of Culture. Language. Identity - Individual/group/geographic. Entertainment. Invention and Creativity. Commerce. Politics. Service. Health. Process. Ritual structure. Familial dimension. Spiritual experience.

The essay is due on Friday October 31. Submit a hard copy and email a word document. Include your name and a title.

SCHEDULE:

Research, materials experiments, and concept development: 2 weeks

Design of the space using actual materials and representations (sketches drawings and models) and

Fabrication of the final pieces: 4 weeks

PROVOCATIONS (for "active" research):

Do some cooking.

Look at how transformation occurs to the "ingredients" in the process of cooking. How the system is larger than its components; how a new nature is created.

Consider the verbs of cooking:

Cutting/chopping/dicing/mincing/grinding/crushing/Steaming/folding/ mixing/ boiling/frying/wrapping/ throwing/ heating/ cooling/freezing/ Thawing/ blending...

Consider the dining space/experience:

The plates, the menu the furniture, the graphics, the environment, the receptionist, the servers' clothes, the food, the privacy devices, the booth, the light fixtures.

Collect menus/ recipes: analyze and interpret them

Observe, document environments: people, food, kitchen, exterior, including your own house/ dorm room. Gather and analyze images of restaurants, dining spaces

Map of Lawrence with restaurants shown?

Look at literary and Media References:

Barthes, Roland. Empire of Signs

Schlosser, Eric. Fast Food Nation

Movies:

Tampopo (Japanese)

Dinner with Andre