

humans and animals don't just reflect but actively *shape* experiences of race, gender, sexuality, nation, species and breed" (p.177). Disability and animal studies scholar Sunaura Taylor emphasizes the ways in which humans, animals, and the environment are connected. Taylor conceives of animals in food production as "manufactured to be disabled, with bodies that have been bred to produce so much product that the animals are impaired" (p.150). Bringing together disability studies and animal studies allows Taylor to think of nonhuman animals as subjects, part of a system of oppression affecting both human and nonhuman animals alike.

Messy Eating is a highly reflexive and deeply personal examination of how people engage with the consumption of animals on a daily basis. Participants are asked biographical questions that reveal how their own experiences inform and are informed by their research. Indigenous and feminist scholar Kim Tallbear explores her relationship with animals growing up, which did not include animals inside the home. She recognized their right to exist but did not necessarily want them in her intimate space. As Tallbear describes, she was raised "implicitly, not explicitly to understand that nonhumans have their life trajectories" making her "very averse to the way humans mess with nonhuman life paths" (p.59). Professor of American studies Sharon Holland seeks to challenge the view of riding horses as primarily a "white bourgeois endeavour" (p.215). She draws on her own experience of riding, along with the storied history of black jockeys who were winning prestigious events. As Holland explains, "this work is a way to remind people that I'm not doing anything that's an anomaly. It's a tradition that I'm helping to keep alive" (p.215). Holland's personal connection with horses, rooted in her biography and identity, informs and drives her research.

The editors of *Messy Eating* have curated a collection of interviews that explore the rougher edges of ethics. This book contemplates how an understanding of interspecies relationships can inform relevant public debates surrounding the politics of food such as agricultural production, animal welfare, human health, and climate change. However, by centering these discussions on the daily dietary practices of researchers, the editors have also crafted an entry point for a general reader to consider these questions and grasp the messiness of placing animals in the contexts of food.

—Brody Trottier, *University of Toronto*

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Food Democracy: Critical Lessons in Food, Communication, Design and Art

Edited by Oliver Vodeb

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500 pp. Illustrations. \$40.00 (paper)

Oliver Vodeb's *Food Democracy* is a comprehensive critique of mainstream design that offers a creative response to the corporatization of our food. With contributions from a wide range of international authors—researchers in communications, art, and design, and several artists, curators, and activists, including the Australian Aboriginal activist group Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy—this compilation is an exciting example of visual communication and design for food studies. Vodeb presents his approach as an inter/extradisciplinary practice that operates at the intersection of art/theory/activism. His intention is to counter and respond to the design industry as a driver of consumption that supports corporate control over our food. The redirection of design as a socially responsive tool is aligned with other design theorists, such as Tony Fry, whom Vodeb credits in the work to revolutionize design.

Vodeb argues that socially responsive design practice can support a sustainable, more democratic food system. No single definition of either concept is offered; rather, food democracy is articulated through several responses that examine power and control alongside possible solutions to corporate dominance, while an understanding of socially responsive design is implied through all of the contributions. Perhaps the volume's most unique attribute is its methodology, which knits different styles together including essays with accompanying recipes, art with reflections and critical responses, and one interview. For example, the inclusion of *Conflict Kitchen* as a substantial interview in a book on visual communication and design is excellent. *Conflict Kitchen* was an art project in the form of a takeout restaurant in Pittsburgh dedicated to serving food from countries in conflict with the United States. The interview provides an overview, pictures, and background of the project with details of its strategies for communication, such as its wrapping of food in interviews with immigrants from the United States. Important for our consideration was that *Conflict Kitchen*, as an art project, enabled a certain engagement with audiences that was multifaceted; taste and aesthetics met with politics. Similarly, this entire book includes

different options for interacting with its audience, inviting readers/viewers to test the recipes, visually digest the art projects, or navigate the political statements amid the busy graphic design.

This is an approachable text that renders a traditional beginning-to-end read unnecessary. Each essay is unique in style, from academic to informal or self-reflective. Other pieces are imaginative, such as Cirila Toplak's "The Final Journey and Beyond," written from a baby animal's point of view before, during, and after slaughter. The design of the volume is itself provocative with eye-catching graphics, collages peppered into essays, and standout colors of vibrant pink and green that highlight changes in content style from plain text essays to recipes. Creative work from the festival *Memefest*, which Vodeb directs and curates, is at the center of the book. In his introduction, he writes that in 2013 *Memefest* hosted a Food Democracy-themed exhibition. This event provided the inspiration for the essay collection, and the artistic works featured in this publication originate from the festival. Vodeb highlights how the festival—which supports a friendly competition that is formative rather than selective—counters what he describes as industries, "self-promotional" design awards which are "aligned with the logic of spectacle and neo-liberal capitalism" (p.17).

After my reading of *Food Democracy*, I tested the recipes that accompany the essays. The first recipe I attempted was guacamole by Eugenio Tisseli, which was quickly abandoned because the instructions requested that it only be followed if the ingredients were local. I am in Montreal, where limes and avocados are never local. Moving onto *borani* by Aida Baghernejad, I was more successful with her simple directions, even though my guilt lingered as I cooked with my

imported spinach. Her yogurt dish was simple and easy to serve, just like the street food she wrote about in her essay, "Hungry." The recipes are an interesting addition to the end of each essay because they are all reflective. For example, Tisseli's guacamole recipe asserts that making guacamole is political, with attention to each of the simple ingredients being local and not genetically engineered; we would have to be in his native country of Mexico to truly follow his recipe. In another way, Baghernejad's essay on street food precedes her recipe for *borani* with her imagining of her own Iranian street food truck menu. The recipes provide a different kind of engagement opportunity, either in analysis or through actually cooking with them, and they reiterate the ingredient metaphor used throughout the book. I felt the recipes presented an extra tool, and I was left with finding a way to use the tool; the process was clearly less about food as a material and more focused on the ideas behind food.

I did find the book's multitude of writing styles and often overlapping fonts, graphics, colors, and visuals distracting. Yet, getting past this, as a food and design scholar I found the approach inspiring and I agree with many of the arguments put forward in the book, from the ideas around changing design to reforming the food system. Predominantly, the essays are less academic and aligned more with a popular essay style. I would recommend this volume as a resource for incorporating art and design pieces into food studies as it is an excellent teaching tool that gives the reader/viewer much choice and opportunity for continued reflection. It serves as an example for food studies of how to "cross-pollinate" various interpretations on one topic and provides a collection of inspiring food democracy projects.

—Pamela Tudge, Concordia University