

BOMPAS & PARR

FUTURE OF FOOD & DRINK

2025



WELCOME TO THE EIGHTH INSTALMENT
OF THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND DRINK BY
THE BOMPAS & PARR TEAM...

...A STUDIO WITH A ZEITGEIST MINDSET WHO HAVE
DELIVERED COUNTLESS EXPERIENCES FOR BOTH THE
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALM, FROM PIONEERING BAR
EXPERIENCES THAT ALLOW ONE TO INHALE THEIR DRINK,
TO DINING SPACES IN THE MIDDLE OF A DESERT WHERE
EVERYTHING IS COOKED OVER STEAMING HOT LAVA

Interrogating the Future of Food and Drink

Sometimes provocative, always inspiring – the Future of Food and Drink is cut directly from the heart of what we do at the Bompas & Parr studio everyday. Building on 17 years of experience across a wide range of sectors, we combine and crystallise the outlooks of architects, development chefs, scientists, designers, creatives, strategists, researchers and makers. Meaning that we don't copy and paste - we actively interrogate.

While standard industry trend reports might have more quantitative data, and pull from more focus groups - most often the trends they identify are over by the time the report is published. To steer clear of this, our Future of Food and Drink intends to inspire as much as predict. We intend to initiate change as much as we report on it.

This reflects an approach that drives Bompas and Parr's strategy more generally - it's one that attracts commercial partners, government agencies and artistic collaborators as it leverages the studio's capacity to consider and develop nascent ideas before they have already reached critical mass.

We invite you to see these predictions not as trends, for trends by their nature impermanent and things don't magically disappear from one year to the next, but instead as contours that will help us collectively map the future.

REFLECTIONS ON 2024



2024 began full of promise.

Surely, finally, this was going to be the year that the new world and the infinite possibilities we've all been speaking about for the past five years were finally going to take root and materialise.

And then...

Well, you don't need us to remind you that our world feels more chaotic than ever. A literal fever dream marked by the anxious tension between sensory overload and under-stimulation, underlined by the evergreen need for agency in the face of uncertainty and crisis.

As a studio, we see it as our role to be optimistic about the future of food and drink, in full understanding and appreciation of the challenges we face. We therefore believe that although these times are marked by chaos, distraction and the darkness of the unknown, that this is not necessarily something we need to fear or avoid. These are also days of change, and uncertainty can in fact be very productive.

It's at times like these that you have to get imaginative. You have to go beyond what's expected. Well, well beyond...

In last year's report we explored the intersection between the two realities of food. Food as immense joy. Food as immense challenge. Observing the rise of systems thinking in our food systems, and unpacking ideas such as Synthetic Enchantment, Water Archaeology and Hyperbolic Drinks.

Since then, we've continued to absorb information from an audaciously expanded field - the latest scientific discoveries, design innovations, technology advancements, shifts in the creative industry, and changing human desire, to name but a few. We've looked the big issues in the eye with trademark irreverence and a sense of humour, challenging ourselves to hold paradox in new ways as we question what is happening in the world and why. And what in turn this means for the future of food and drink.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S DRIVING THE FUTURE OF FOOD & DRINK?

MACRO DRIVER

Full System Reset

To date, the defining narrative of civilisation and the conception of progress has been one of human betterment through control or domination over the world, over society, the forces of nature, and the wildness inside us that would disrupt civilisation and progress. Or as 17th century philosopher René Descartes put it, to render ourselves “lords and possessors”.

While this narrative has successfully carried civilisation through immense progress to where we are today, there is no escaping the fact that it's no longer animating our society as it once did. Our global food systems remain as fragile as ever.

The 2024 State of Soils in Europe report laid bare alarming trends of soil degradation in the EU. Farmers in Britain have been taking to the streets to protest and highlight the impossible future they now face. Computation has evolved into something so persuasive and seductive that people are starting to think more and more like the machines, or perhaps we are no longer thinking at all.

As a result, creativity is suffering. Budgets are being cut, algorithms have us stuck in echo chambers of inspiration, and redundancies are happening worldwide - with creative fatigue being felt on a global scale as we're perpetually trying to keep up and react.

Over the next decade, the structures of our inner and outer world that are the most rigid, and traditionally held as the standard or the norm, will be tried, tested, and in the end completely reconfigured as we go beyond what has been narrated to us as reality today.

In short, we're preparing for a complete systems update.



MICRO DRIVER

Collective F U

300 years ago, a small group of under-appreciated, mostly young professionals had finally had enough of living in a society run badly by a self-interested and self-serving establishment. Disruption was the constant backdrop to their lives as they faced ongoing uncertainty and mass redundancy. The rules of the day favoured an elite few, and for the majority of people, life was unclear, unfair and unfulfilling.

This was the reality of who we know today as the Pirates.

As a studio, we're big fans. The Pirates decided to do something about it, they decided to break the rules and then remake them. They didn't just reject society, they reinvented it.

Since then, this renegade energy has resurfaced in a myriad of ways that spans the personal to the political - with subcultures, creative collectives and citizens harnessing it to create acid house, abstract expressionism and call out social inequality on the world's stage.

Most recently, we've observed its return through the revival of rave culture and mosh pits, a collective back turn to living life perfectly so that we can embrace it fully, with several of London's cultural institutions set to celebrate boundary pushing subcultures and artists in 2025.

We see this rebellious attitude and high-octane energy continuing to grow, inevitably moving out of the zeitgeist and into mainstream consciousness as it translates into what, and how, we will be eating and drinking in the near future.



Acid House as it Happened, Dave Swindells, 2022

MICRO DRIVER

The Year of Quantum Everything

100 years since the initial development of quantum mechanics, the United Nations has proclaimed 2025 the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. This year-long, worldwide initiative will be observed through activities at all levels aimed to increase public awareness of the importance of quantum science and its applications.

Quantum physics is one of the most fascinating, confusing, and terrifying areas of science, because it gets right down to the nature and fabric of what reality is.

As was seen in the work that won the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physics, when scientists go down to this subatomic level, the rules of reality as we understand it (through time and space), no longer apply.

There is no such thing as an objectively existing world – no world out there apart from our observation of it. In fact, according to quantum theory, we are inside the very universe we are trying to understand.

It is important to try and understand this as it renders our inner attitudes, thoughts, beliefs and assumptions about our food systems, as well as how we consume and experience food and drink, to be merely subjective states of mind.



Pink Floyd, Pulse Box Set Cover, Storm Thorgerson, 1995

MICRO DRIVER

New Age of Romanticism

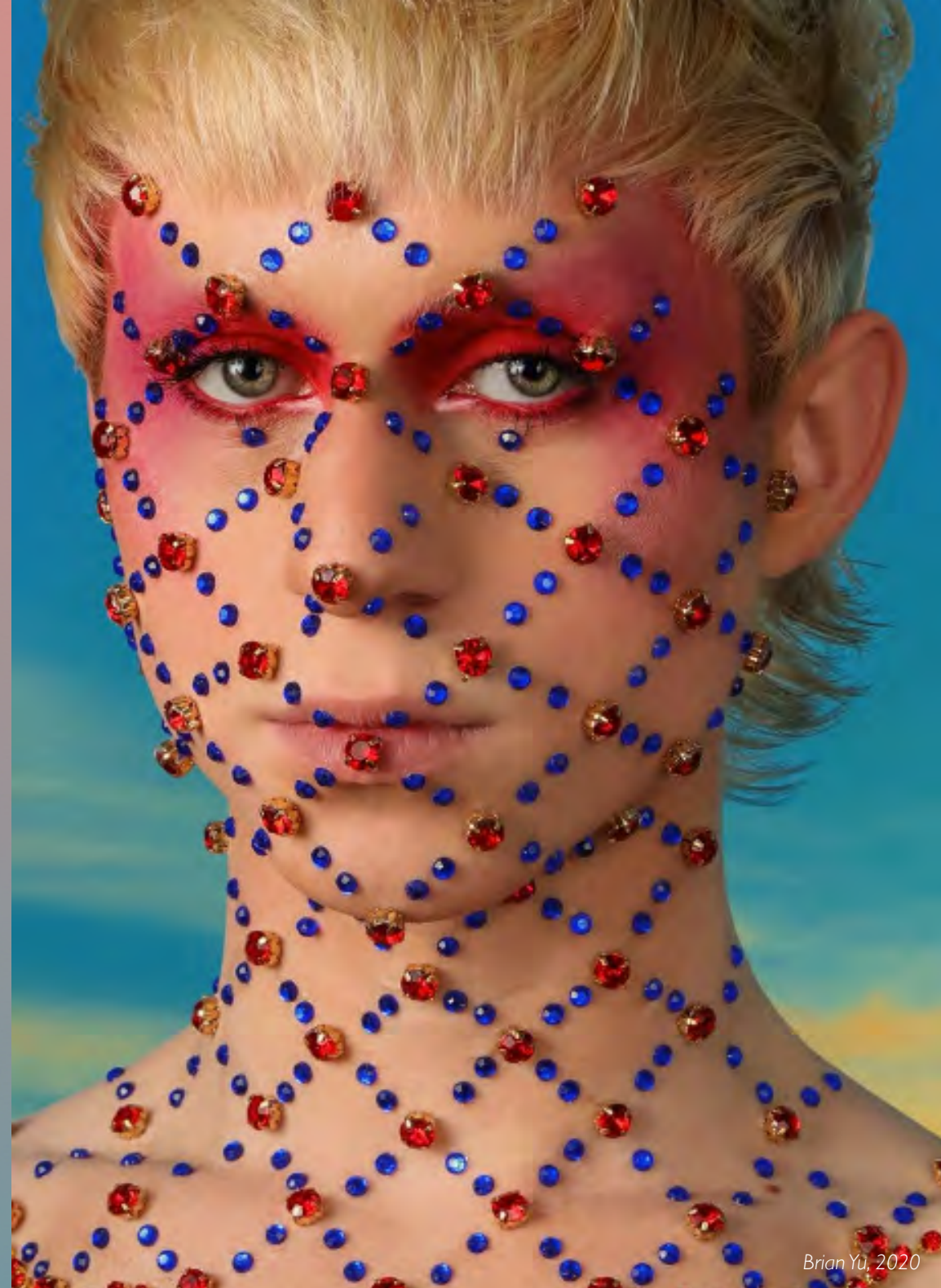
Convenience and algorithms are making our lives duller. It's dulling our senses, the way we experience the world, and even the way we create beauty.

Even just 10, 15 or 20 years ago, when the world was less connected, individuality and creativity really stood out. Today, everybody has access to the same influences and our decisions are governed by a rising dominance of data and technology.

This is making it much harder to stand apart – whether that be as an individual, a business, a brand, a place, a product or an experience.

As a result, these past few months have been peppered, then fully shaken, with an outcry for the return of true creativity.

The Romantics emphasised the importance of imagination, moving away from a period that was all about reason and knowledge – Bompas & Parr believes we are on the cusp of a new age of romanticism. Moving away from convenience and data in order to return to a truly creative way of being and therefore eating and drinking.



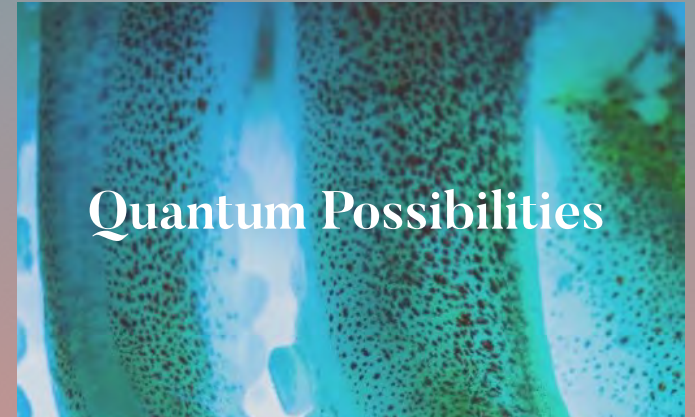
The Future of Food and Drink 2025



Shocking Dinners



Eating the Inedible



Quantum Possibilities



Strangescaping



The Flavours of Memory



Savourmentality

A Van de Graaff generator is shown with a bright blue, branching electrical discharge. The background is a deep blue with a fine, dark grid pattern, resembling a wire mesh. The generator's base and internal components are visible at the bottom, with the discharge extending upwards and outwards.

PREDICTION ONE

Shocking Dinners

1

PREDICTION ONE: Shocking Dinners

The act of eating is inherently violent; flesh rendered from bone and stem before being crushed between teeth, masticated to a pulp, and sent into an acidic abyss. Even the act of drinking alcohol is a practice in toxin ingestion and removal. There is simply no escaping the nature of consumption as a shockingly inseparable act to destruction.

This trend focuses on dining experiences that elicit strong feelings and emotions that we would not normally expect such as arousal, shock, horror and pain, and how they influence taste and flavour.

It explores how different receptors being triggered might influence taste and the effect that triggers such as anticipation, fear, revulsion and seduction might have on the final gastronomic experience.

In today's world, we are sick to our stomachs of the saccharine 'vanilla' of prim dining experiences - guests are looking to be shocked, scared even, in order to feel something, to leave a meal feeling as though an experience has been had rather than mere perfunctory pabulum.

This is where Shocking Dinners comes in.

“Whatever had the most shock value became my meal of choice. Your body is not a temple, it's an amusement park. Enjoy the ride.”

Anthony Bourdain



SHOCKING DINNERS

It is important to first define what we mean by “shock”. From arousal to discomfort, repulsion or the tension between pleasure and pain, shock can take many forms, heightening emotions that are often expressed physically, through sensations such as salivation, sweat and tumescence (at the more *excitable* end of the spectrum).

As humans, we’ve had a long-standing fascination with shock that has ebbed and flowed in varying degrees through time. Today, we’re seeing this fascination ooze back in as horror films return their gaze to the body grotesque (*The Substance* received five nominations at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards, including Best Motion Picture), and Sarah Kane’s final masterpiece, *4.48 Psychosis*, returns to the stage to plunge its audience into a psyche teetering on the edge of oblivion.

Shock is also rising as creative inspiration within gastronomic experiences, with an example being the work of Brazilian chef and artist, Caique Tizzi, who recently created a 3-hour performative dinner for *Young Boy Dancing Group* which left no taboos out.



SHOCKING DINNERS

In science, the idea that pain may serve to produce pleasurable states has been noted by theorists for years and, more recently, substantiated by empirical findings. One 2014 study, whose full title is: 'Gustatory pleasure and pain. The offset of acute physical pain enhances responsiveness to taste' explored the possibility that, beyond producing positive hedonic states, the offset of pain may serve to enhance the capacity for gustatory pleasure. They found that cold-pressor pain enhances the enjoyment of pleasant tastes, that pain increases intensity and sensitivity to a range of tastes and flavours, and that pain increases sensitivity to gustatory stimuli.

To understand this phenomena, we must first look to the mouth, the gateway to the stomach and the initial passage through which food enters the body. This is where *oral somatosensory awareness* occurs; the somatic sensations that arise in the mouth that provide important information to the brain about objects within the mouth, and to the structure of the oral tissue itself. Due to the powerful innervation of nerves within the oral tissues, the mouth is where we experience some of the most vivid and intense bodily experiences.

When we get to the stomach, there are various proverbs around having 'gut feelings', being able to 'stomach something' or 'having eyes bigger than one's stomach'. This is not surprising, since the gut and mind are linked both physically and biochemically via the 'gut-brain axis', primarily through the vagus nerve.



SHOCKING DINNERS

We predict a rise in the exploration of somatically shocking experiences with restaurants and dining establishments playing with conceptually unusual elements that strive to disrupt the dining experience and go from plate to perception, pleasure to pain.

We envision food that is made to send shivers down the spine, meals paired with scary films to make for a truly shocking experience, visually frightening food that generates fear and revulsion to spur excitement, hunger becoming desire as guests indulge in meals that look utterly horrific but taste heavenly.

Imagine a Michelin star dinner set out in a dark basement where guests are asked to sit on electric chairs that gently zap and prick to provide a frisson of excitement every time a guest takes a bite. Perhaps we'll start to see guests being provided with a heart racing experience that gets blood and adrenaline pumping before digging into a fabulous feast.





PREDICTION TWO

Eating the Inedible

PREDICTION TWO: Eating the Inedible

We live in a world where sustainability, closed loop circularity, and regeneration are of the utmost importance in order to work towards positively transforming our food systems and saving our planet.

Is it time we started looking to create food from the previously assumed inedible?

We've already explored geophagy, so what else can we look to for new sources of vitamins and minerals? What can quantum theory unlock for us in the way of entirely new possibilities?

Liv Tsim, a Central St Martins Biodesign Student recently explored the idea of eating wasted pure copper from E-waste - in total, the UK generates around 6 million tonnes of e-waste every year.

Through a bioleaching process, Tsim's bacteria assistants extract and purify the pure copper from e-waste as well as clean them enough to return to the human body and nature. Copper is one of the essential minerals the human needs - so Tsim developed a sweet made from the copper that benefits our body as a supplement.



EATING THE INEDIBLE

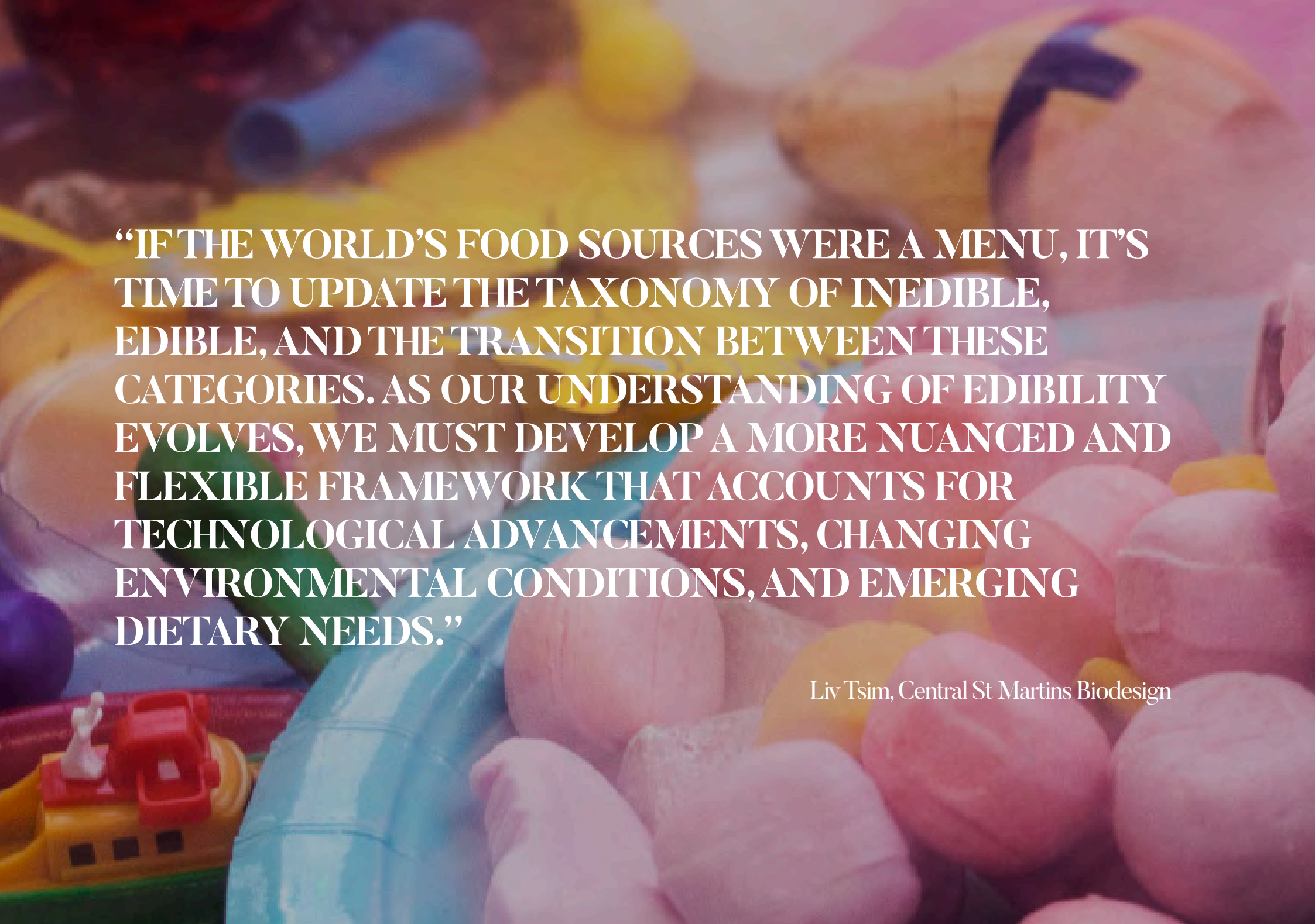
There are a plethora of global innovators working at the forefront of food and drink futures, exploring how materials and ingredients perceived as inedible might form the basis of our future menus and utilising byproducts that would normally be simply discarded as waste.

One such example is *Novonutrients*, whose platform is powered by microbes and proprietary bioreactors, utilising organisms that transform CO₂ emissions, along with hydrogen and oxygen, into natural single cell protein ingredients for food and feed.

Another innovator to note is *Green Spot Technologies* who have created a range of nutrient dense powders that utilise fermentation to leverage upcycling at industrial scale to produce natural ingredients with an incredibly minimal footprint.

Researchers have even developed a method to reuse plastics – including those employed in electronics, computers and packaging – as hydrogen fuel, food preservatives, and other products. The method involves breaking down carbon-carbon bonds using LEDs and a commercially available vanadium catalyst, after a dichloromethane solution first dissolves the plastic. Whilst we are a way off using our old plastics from e-waste to develop food preservatives, it is interesting to note that the possibilities of future food production could shift towards the inedible.





“IF THE WORLD’S FOOD SOURCES WERE A MENU, IT’S TIME TO UPDATE THE TAXONOMY OF INEDIBLE, EDIBLE, AND THE TRANSITION BETWEEN THESE CATEGORIES. AS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EDIBILITY EVOLVES, WE MUST DEVELOP A MORE NUANCED AND FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK THAT ACCOUNTS FOR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, AND EMERGING DIETARY NEEDS.”

Liv Tsim, Central St Martins Biodesign

EATING THE INEDIBLE

When it comes to quantum theory, we are beginning to see quantum physics heralded as the new frontier in farming - being used to regenerate the soil, increase harvest yields, and improve the nutritional value and flavour profile of organic matter:

Another very real possibility is that in the future, we'll be able to use quantum physics to harness and infuse the life-giving property of food and drinks into the previously inedible. Inspired by the work of award-winning artist and PhD quantum physicist Libby Heaney, which explores life in the parallel realities and how slime is an entangling substance between all life forms, we see a future where slime moves onto our plates, infused with all the nutrients we need. Potentially without the need to consume physical matter at all...

So what does this mean for the future of food and drink?



and it oozed out of the machine , Libby Heaney, 2022

EATING THE INEDIBLE

Expect to see menus of poisonous cocktails and poisonous aperitifs - deriving from once assumed poisonous plants, with scientists finding new ways to extract the edible to make them safe for consumption. This could open a whole new world of flavour.

We predict food factories being set up adjacent to e-waste landfills in order to harvest the likes of copper and infuse it into takeaway lunches for e-waste workers.

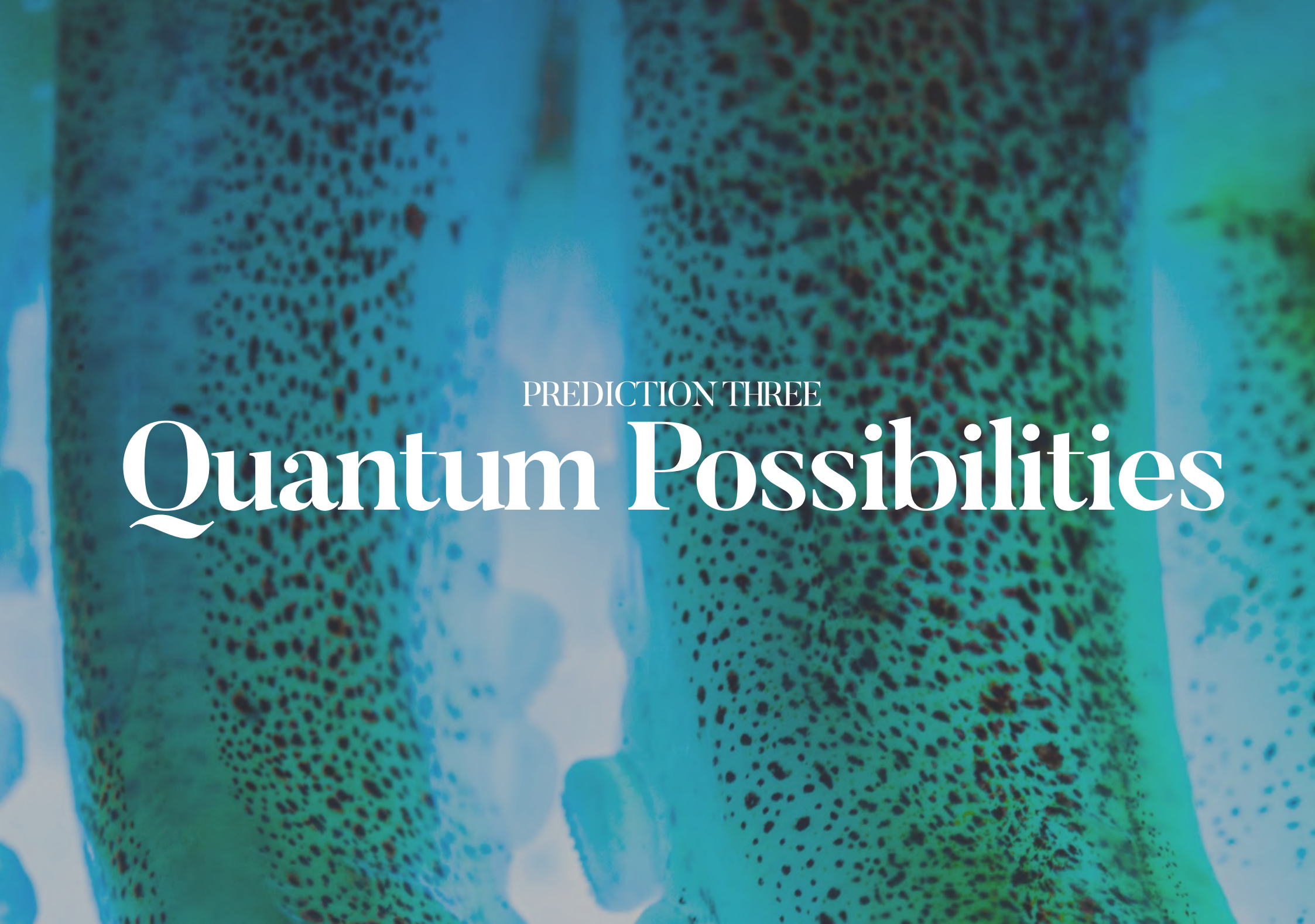
If you really want to test your perception of reality, consider this - humanity will soon be in a post virtual world, and with it we'll have the ability to decouple our sensory human desire from the physical inputs traditionally required to fulfil them. As Professor of Innovation, Robert Wolcott, puts forward in his book 'Foresight', this means in the future we'll be able to "not have our cakes and eat them too."





“IN THE FUTURE, WE’LL BE ABLE TO NOT
HAVE OUR CAKES AND EAT THEM TOO”

Robert Wolcott, Professor of Innovation



PREDICTION THREE

Quantum Possibilities

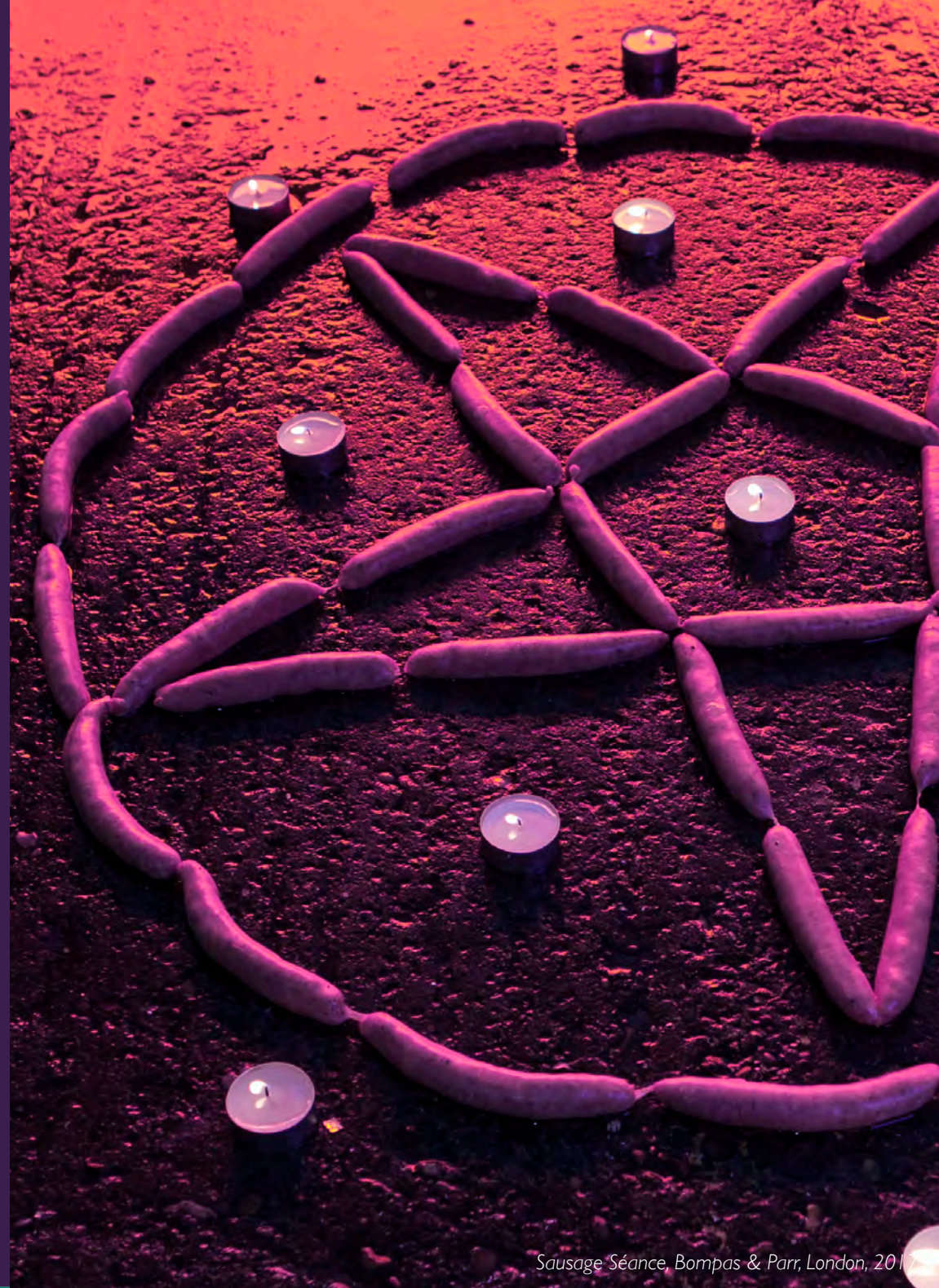
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PREDICTION THREE: Quantum Possibilities

Since 2021, there has been a marked increase in interest for Paganism, with 95,000 people in the UK Census describing themselves as “believers in Paganism, Wicca, or Shamanism”, a substantial incline from the last two decades Census results, where the number sat at 70,000 in 2011, and just 42,000 in 2001.

When we combine this with the rise in approaches to eating that have the least impact on the environment such as the ‘Climatarian diet’, or the ‘Rengenivores’ who eat by centring the products of regenerative agriculture, there’s a clear increase in interest for belief systems and food philosophies that are rooted in care and reverence for nature.

These aren’t just systems and philosophies that traverse food, nature, myth and humanity, science is now proving their understanding of an interconnected world to be true.



QUANTUM POSSIBILITIES

In 2022, the Nobel Prize for Physics was awarded to a group of boundary pushing scientists who proved that 'quantum entanglement' was not just a theory, but the very mechanics that our world is built from. Now most of us are still trying to understand what this means, but put very simply, they were able to show that two quantum particles were able to talk to or communicate with each other instantly, no matter how far apart the quantum particles were in spacetime.

This means that you could put one particle on the Sun and one here on Earth and there would be no nine minute delay as there is with light. Instead, these particles, the very particles that everything in our known universe is made up from (including you and I and the food and drink we consume), can instantly communicate with each other, interconnected beyond time and space.

When we also consider findings such as the infamous phantom leaf experiment of the 70s, which used Kirlian photography to show how when we cut the physical body of a leaf, its energetic body remains intact, certain philosophical questions begin to be raised about the absorption of energy that acts as part of these entangled systems. Items of food and drink get broken down in our bodies and integrated to become a part of the molecules and tissues within us, a form of transubstantiation occurring through digestion.

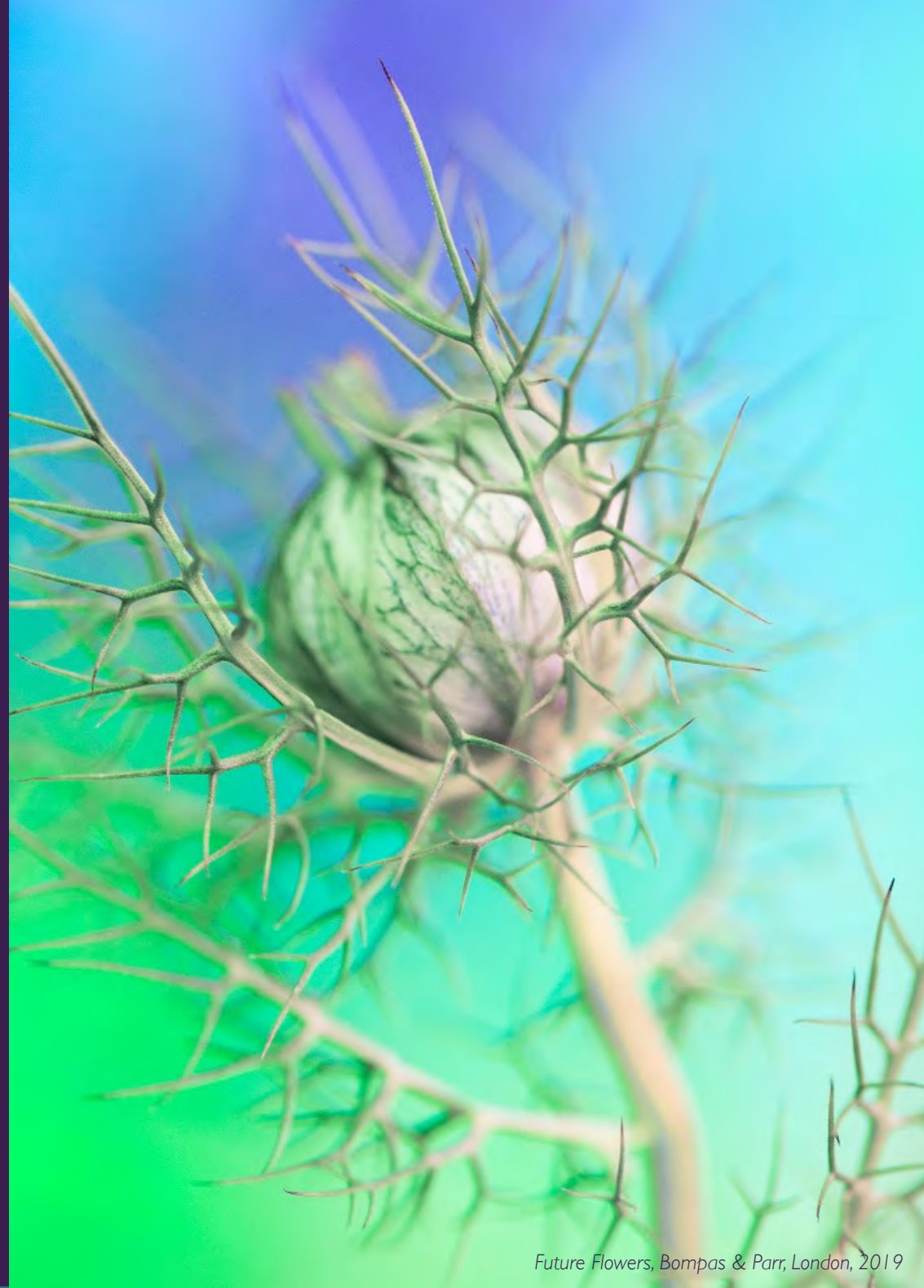
What's really interesting to note here is that these scientific theories and experiments also perfectly align with the Irish mythology that pre-dates Christianity, and the understanding of the known universe taught through the Andean shamanic tradition that is over 20,000 years old.



QUANTUM POSSIBILITIES

In Irish mythology, the other world is a parallel universe. It's a mirror that exists right alongside the local reality that you and I experience right now. Time doesn't exist in the other world. In the other world knowledge is infinite, as is artistic inspiration, food, and possibility.

According to Irish mythology the first thing to ever come into creation was a hazel tree, and its branches contained all the knowledge of the universe. This hazel tree flourished over the Well of Wisdom within which lived a great speckled salmon. The story goes that the salmon ate the hazel nuts which on one occasion fell into the well, thus acquiring all the wisdom of the universe and absorbing all the knowledge of the other world into its body. It was then foretold that whoever could catch and eat the salmon would gain this wisdom instantly.



QUANTUM POSSIBILITIES

In the Andean shamanic traditions, everything is energy, everything is interconnected. Our thinking minds are programs run by our brains, with our bodies holding true wisdom and knowledge, while simultaneously acting as the physical representations of our life experiences to date.

As a master healer and thought leader, Anna Hunt, spoke to an enthralled audience of scientists and medical leaders in the US last year - showing how the beliefs we hold about our local reality significantly alter both our external and internal experience of life. In her illuminating keynote, Hunt used science to illustrate the power that deeply felt intention has over our physical bodies - from the way we heal from medical procedures and recover from illness, to the way our bodies react when we consume food and drink.

For example, this means that the act of drinking alcohol with friends when we are truly connected and experiencing joy, has an entirely different impact on the body at a cellular level to drinking exactly the same but with a different intention.



QUANTUM POSSIBILITIES

When it comes to what this all means for our kitchen and dining experiences, we believe we are on the dawn of a new type of renaissance, where soul meets science to create quantum food and drink futures.

We'll see development chefs and master blenders working together with quantum physicists and thought leaders in mythology and ancient spirituality. Together they will imagine and create new eating experiences, developing new forms of edibles and liquids that quantum collapse the minds programming to tap into the knowledge of parallel realities and our 13 billion year old universe.

More imminently, perhaps we'll start to see new rituals set tableside for diners to tap into the divinity of nature, holding reverence for the food they are about to consume and synchronising with the energy present in the meal before tucking in. Maybe this will translate to the home, with dinner party guests entering a sanctum of savour that aims to enhance the eating and drinking experience through spiritual offering or collective intention. Instead of the 'raw water' trend or functional waters enhanced with nootropics, maybe we'll see regionally ritualised water from sacred sources that imbue us with a deeper connection to the very life force that sustains us.



A man with a long, dark, curly beard and mustache is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a dark, textured jacket over a light-colored shirt. His left hand is raised to his face, touching his beard. In front of him is a large, dark, polished wooden bowl filled with cooked chicken feet. To the right of the bowl, there is a small metal cup containing a yellow liquid, and a wooden spoon or stick is resting in it. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a backdrop. The overall lighting is dim and moody, creating a somber or mysterious atmosphere.

PREDICTION FOUR

Strangescaping

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PREDICTION FOUR: Strangescaping

We spend so much time dissecting the contents of our dinners, yet the paraphernalia that surrounds a dinner is often overlooked. In 2020 we explored 'Extreme Tablescapeing'. Since then, this has continued to rise in popularity, which got us wondering, what next?

In their book, *Multisensory Flavor Perception: From Fundamental Neuroscience Through to the Marketplace*, authors Charles Spence and Betina Piqueras-Fiszman highlight the importance of the oral-somatosensory attributes of food and drink in our enjoyment and perception of them. What their findings essentially uncover is that beyond the multisensory textural properties of the food itself, the external elements such as cutlery and crockery can also influence the experiences we have when dining.



Ménagère, Salvador Dalí, 1957

STRANGESCAPING

In 2024, Surrealism turned 100 and exhibitions around the world celebrated the art movement. One of its most iconic stalwarts, Salvador Dalí, was just as obsessed with food as us, with it both featuring prominently in his work and inspiring his infamous dinner parties.

Now what's fascinating here is how Dalí found that although his parties were spectacular surrealist spectacles, the dinner was never as wonderful as the conversation. So much so he even dedicated an entire chapter to these discussions in his book *Les Dîners de Gala*.

For example, this means that the act of drinking alcohol with friends when we are truly connected and experiencing joy, has an entirely different impact on the body at a cellular level to drinking exactly the same but with a different intention.

How can the purpose of tables, plates, cutlery and even napkins, drive better storytelling to inspire the creativity and imagination we so desperately crave and need?



Sodomized Entrées, Salvador Dalí, 1971

STRANGESCAPING

In the 13th Century, the Silver Tree of Karakoum was erected during the Mongol Empire, for the grandson of Ghengis Khan and his guests. Not only was this an impressive structure, but it was also a drinking fountain which overflowed with various alcoholic drinks.

Crowned by a trumpet-wielding angel, the main structure formed a magnificent silver tree, wrapped in silver serpents and complete with branches, leaves, and fruit. At its roots sat “four lions of silver, each with a conduit through it, and all belching forth white milk of mares.” Up in the branches, four pipes emerged to splash a different alcoholic beverages down to silver basins waiting below.

This beautiful, albeit extravagant structure, had one sole purpose - to deliver drinks to Khan and his guests - essentially a free bar.

Bompas & Parr believes that we can borrow references like this to generate our own extravagant drinking fountains - imagine the water fountain at your local swimming pool becoming a structural wonder which tells the stories of the local area. Or the coffee dispenser at work being created in collaboration with a famous architect to add creative sustenance to every coffee moment.

Perhaps physical bars will transform altogether, into spectacles of wonder that deliver drinks to guests in strange and unexpected ways. Maybe even moving past the physical to serve levitating liquids in figurative voids so that guests can experience the purest tasting known to man.



Original illustration by Mathieu-Richard-Auguste Henrion from *Missions Catholiques* vol 1.33, plate vii (1902)

STRANGESCAPING

The Beauty of the Fold: A Conversation With Joan Sallas, 2012

In recent years, we have seen the likes of Eatrenalin go ‘beyond the plate’ with moving tables that transport guests, quite literally, on a ride through different dinner courses. We’ve seen Balboste create a gravity defying table for Ashi Studio.

In the future, we see table design briefs moving beyond function, into experience. Which raises the questions - Do we even need to sit at tables? Are tables made from textures that enhance the eating ritual? Could tables stretch between different locations?

Then we take a look at what actually sits on our tables - in 16th Century Italy, napkins were once used to generate elaborate table displays called ‘Triumphs’ - they depicted real or mythical animals, natural elements such as trees and architectural shapes that resembled castles or fountains.

Today's humble napkin is often left to a simple fold in restaurants, but draws parallels with these displays, in that they have become bearers of inspiring ideas. In fact, the idea for the world's most successful budget airline came about in 1966, when Rollin King, owner of a small Texas commuter carrier, was pitching his plan for a new, low-cost service to his lawyer, Herb Kelleher. He drew the prospective route between Dallas, Houston and San Antonio on a napkin. The following year, the pair launched Southwest Airlines.

We believe it time has come for the humble napkin to be turned into a vector for innovation – it deserves to be taken more seriously and have pride on tabletops, given the possibilities that can come out of them.



STRANGESCAPING

When it comes to the rest of the dining experience, we foresee a future where the paraphernalia that surrounds a dinner is shaped with extra sensorial stimulus that generates new ideas and experiences.

Strangescaping sees environmental storytelling come to our napkins, tables and drinks dispensers, providing diners with extra sensorial stimulus in order to generate new ideas and experiences.



A conceptual image featuring a human brain, colored in a vibrant pink hue, nestled within the hollowed-out, light-brown shell of a walnut. The shell is cracked open, revealing the brain's intricate, folded surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue. The text 'PREDICTION FIVE' is centered above the main title.

PREDICTION FIVE

The Flavours of Memory

PREDICTION FIVE:

The Flavours of Memory

Our experiences of the world are formed through sensory inputs, none more so than our sense of taste. Food brings us sustenance and joy, enables connectivity and social cohesion, and produces energy that physically changes us and grounds us to our mortality as we learn to listen to the wants and needs of our body.

Consider how when we return from a holiday the things we most often share with friends and family are details about the food we ate. Our memories are intrinsically linked to the sensory inputs that surround us, none more so than that which we ingest.

In the world of neuroscience, there are many key theories as to how the brain works, with emerging research looking at the brain as being 'adaptive'. This theoretical framework posits the brain responding to stress and changing internal and external environments in a way that demonstrates changes in relative activity levels of different cerebral networks that are always active in some way, rather than the brain simply responding to a stimulus passively. The brain instead makes rapid predictions of internal and external needs and adapts accordingly, forging connections and reactions that rely on several areas of the brain rather than pure reptilian response.



THE FLAVOURS OF MEMORY

When it comes to how memory works in the brain, studies have found a number of key characteristics between odour memory that show a high resistance to interference, with evolutionary changes to the olfactory bulb and the main olfactory system following birth as playing a key role in our recall and association of food and drink.

Certain olfactory cues in mammals play an important role in social cohesion and bonding, with maternal breast odours as individually distinctive to an infant, in order to provide recognition between mother and offspring.

Taste in particular has a strong connection to memory due in large part to the strength of scent, with the olfactory bulb closely linked to two important brain areas- the amygdala and the hippocampus, responsible for emotion and memory respectively; the coaction of these two areas in the brain form the basis of creating food memories.



THE FLAVOURS OF MEMORY

Furthermore, the sensory information captured by the tongue provides an intriguing look into how and why our sense of taste develops. Summarily, the tongue receives sensory information via papillae on its surface, which then translates the interaction into a chemical message about what is in the mouth: hot, cold, hard, soft etc. This information is then relayed to the brain to be understood, via a series of complex nerve structures, the innervation of which is complex, but essentially relies on three main nerves, with the brainstem acting as a sorting room for each sensory modality so that they can be processed in the correct way.

Our exploration of the world as infants primarily happens through taste and touch, which is why visual representations of sensory homunculus (such as the image here) are shown with overly large hands and mouths. It is ultimately due to this that sensory memory exists, with less desirable tastes and feelings processed as such; sand and dirt equals 'not tasty' - stored and retrieved in adulthood.



THE FLAVOURS OF MEMORY

This is also where the surprising phenomenon of 'mouthfeel memory' comes from, with our tongue knowing exactly what things would feel like when licked without the need to lick them, whether that be a computer screen, concrete wall or polystyrene.

Even when you think you don't know what something tastes or feels like, your tongue certainly does.

We believe that food and drink experiences of the future will tap into this intriguing world of nerve stimulation and reception, exploring dining experiences that rely only on having a menu described to you to stimulate mouthfeel memory, or asking guests to describe a memory for a chef to recreate in a Proustian feast for the senses.

Understanding what the science of nerve arousal could do for the impact of taste, we foresee a rise in dining experiences that tap into mouthfeel stimulation through a balance of different temperatures, textures, and Scoville scaling.

Imagine a meal where diners are asked to dip food into a roulette style table of ingredients that stimulate different nerves and perceptions to completely change the response a food item has when it hits the tongue. Maybe we'll even see at home 'memory meals' where kits are prepared that respond to memories submitted, to recreate a particular summer on the coast, or the feeling of eating blades of grass and handfuls of dirt as a toddler exploring the world for the first time.



A close-up photograph of a person's arms and hands resting on a thick, shaggy, light brown fur rug. The person is wearing a white, long-sleeved shirt with the sleeves rolled up. The hands are positioned on the rug, with fingers slightly spread. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a cozy atmosphere. The fur has a mix of light and dark brown tones, giving it a textured appearance.

PREDICTION SIX

Savourmentality

6

PREDICTION SIX: Savourmentality

Our last prediction explores the potential of savouring to be the new mindfulness when it comes to gastronomic experience, looking at notions of savour-led time dilation, food to mouth transition, and switched off eating experiences. Why? We have three main reasons.

By now most of us will have heard of mindful eating, but in western societies adoption of mindful Buddhist practices we have unknowingly removed most of its heart and meaning. Instead often using them to dissociate from reality or as a perceived silver bullet to enhance personal gain. When we go back to consider our key drivers, what we actually crave and need right now is the total opposite.



SAVOURMENTALITY

The second, comes from a randomised clinical trial conducted in 2024 that evaluated the efficacy of Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement (MORE) among past and present U.S. military personnel who are struggling with chronic pain and PTSD. What really ignited our imaginations here was how the study found that mindfulness-oriented recovery was superior to supportive psychotherapy when it was combined with the therapeutic process of savouring food. In fact, several studies have been conducted on the benefits of savouring for chronic pain and as part of supportive therapies. Savouring was found to 'increase cerebral blood flow, increase cognitive connectivity, and significantly increase positive emotions, reducing anhedonic symptoms.'

Our third, exists in the early 1900s, where Horace Fletcher, a health reformer who thought people didn't chew their food nearly enough, decided to champion the art of slow eating. In fact, he once chewed an onion 722 times - this became known as Fletcherism - the idea that you must essentially digest your food in the mouth before swallowing.

Whilst the aim of Fletcherism was to aid healthy digestion, it got us thinking - sitting still to chew an onion that many times can have only resulted in a truly savouring moment - one of a thought provoking capacity, almost sending you into daytime dreamland as the onion turns from crunchy bites into an oozing liquid.



SAVOURMENTALITY

Eating food is something that people have always enjoyed, but we have lived in an era of convenience for the last decade, where we have been encouraged to live our lives as quick as possible, from last minute Uber requests to meals delivered to our doors in 30 minutes from a whole host of restaurants.

The Romantics emphasised the importance of imagination, moving away from a period that was all about reason and knowledge. As we shared earlier, Bompas & Parr believes we are on the cusp of a new age of romanticism. And romanticism in food production and consumption is all about celebrating the creation of food, finding intriguing stories and not shying away from decadence.

A favourite artist of the studio, William Blake, once said 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom...You never know what is enough until you know what is more than enough'.

For food production and consumption, this means stepping away from convenience and extrapolating the senses that surround a food to push its possibilities - ultimately savouring it in every way imaginable.



A still life photograph featuring a light-colored ceramic plate with a subtle floral pattern. On the plate are several round, golden-brown cookies with a slightly textured surface. Scattered around the plate and on the surface beneath it are numerous dried rose petals in shades of pink, red, and orange. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of these colors, creating a romantic and artistic atmosphere.

**“THE ROAD OF EXCESS LEADS TO THE PALACE
OF WISDOM...YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT IS
ENOUGH UNTIL YOU KNOW WHAT IS MORE
THAN ENOUGH”**

William Blake, Artist

SAVOURMENTALITY

But instead of doing this for health benefits, this is about doing it for mouthfeel and a journey of the palate. It means indulgently dissecting whatever sits on a plate in front of you, establishing rituals around a simple plate of pasta to truly enjoy and romanticise every bite. It means dining with your food - taking in every view of it before consuming it, as opposed to taking a quick photo to upload to social media.

Imagine a new era of solo dining, where diners sit opposite mirrors in order to really enjoy their food, viewing themselves eat every mouthful - we are after all used to seeing ourselves on zoom multiple times most days....why not eat in front of a mirror as you ritualise that plate of pasta.

Or what if we got really intimate with our food by simply removing cutlery and considering the connection between the fingers and food items?

In 1963, Sylvia Plath wrote in the Bell Jar that she observed a poet eating a salad "with his fingers, leaf by leaf", making it "seem to be the only natural and sensible thing to do". And José Pizarro, the acclaimed Spanish owner and founder of the Pizarro group of restaurants, describes eating with hands as "the best way to eat. It's a visceral pleasure that's really hard to beat...it creates a sort of magical connection between you and the food".

That sounds like a perfectly romanticised way to savour your food to us.





**“IT’S A VISCERAL PLEASURE THAT’S REALLY
HARD TO BEAT...IT CREATES A SORT OF
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AND THE FOOD”**

José Pizzaro, Chef & Restaurateur

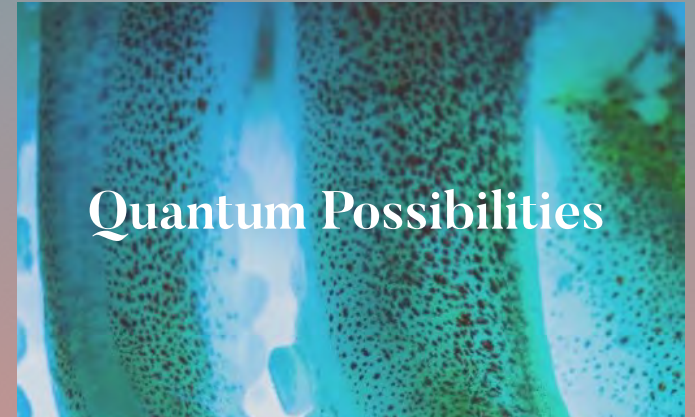
The Future of Food and Drink 2025



Shocking Dinners



Eating the Inedible



Quantum Possibilities



Strangescaping



The Flavours of Memory



Savourmentality

Thank You

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