The Cocktail effect
As soon as it ripens it rots
Karolina Hägg
Abstract

This essay will explain some of the key concepts of my theoretical interests of my artistic practice. “The cocktail effect” is a work where I use corpus and a table setting as basis for my investigation into the ambivalence I experience in the food culture of today. It is an investigation into all chemicals found in food, how they affect our bodies, and into the relation between the two and the field of corpus and craft.

The work consists of a table, a chair and a setting on the table. The table setting is the central point of my work, together with the different objects and corpus pieces that constitute it. The objects and their materials are a part of the investigation and my media to bring forth the questions and concerns I have about today’s food culture. In the essay I explain the different material choices, what they for me symbolize and what kind of culture the material already has. I also explain the concept of using a table setting to tell my story and how my work relates to the field of corpus and the time we live in.

I have looked at ongoing discussions concerning foods, trends happening within the field, studies that describe the effect that chemicals have on our bodies and also documentations that describes the processing of food. I have transformed this information and material into a table setting, which talks about the ignorance and the ambivalence that exists in our food culture and highlights facts that are kept hidden from us.

In my work and in my essay I describe and investigate how I can use the field of corpus to tell the story of our everyday food culture.
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INTRODUCTION AND FOOD CULTURE
One of the spring’s most dominating news has been the horse meat scandal. On the 7th of February 2013, the food company Findus declared that all their lasagnas should be sent back and not be sold, because they contained horse meat instead of beef, which is the ingredient listed on the package. Soon it unfolded that it was not only Findus products, but also, for example, Lidl, Ica, Ikea, Eldorado, Hemköp, Willys and Coop products. The debate grew quickly and a wave of more facts and information about an illegal trade of meat unfolded in the news. The meat is also said to contain horses’ medicines that have harmful effects on humans. On top of this, there were accusations that the industry supported weapons’ trades. This turned out to be a money making illegal industry that covers many European countries, such as Ireland, England, Poland, Germany, Rumania, Italy, Spain, Holland, and Sweden.¹ This is a perfect example of how clueless we are about what our food actually contains. Not only there is a lack in knowledge of what kind of ingredients the products consist of, but it is also interesting to acknowledge all the chemicals that the foods in general contain and how these affect our bodies.

In the Swedish documentary “Underkastelsen” by Stefan Jarl, it is shown that in a normal tomato you can find up to 12 different pesticides; in a normal chili fruit up to 29. This is something that we as consumers are bereft the control of. The vegetables we buy don’t need to have an ingredient list. Approximately two thirds of all these pesticides used for fruit and vegetables are substances that are automatically absorbed by a human body. In some cases, pesticides that have been prohibited for a long time can today be found in common food products. This is showing that they are in fact still in use.²

We have managed to modify an ordinary chicken to double in size in less than half the time it normally takes. We have managed to manipulate the animal’s muscle mass to get more food, better taste, bigger fillets.³ Do we even know the taste of a normal chicken? We have probably forgotten. In the book “Den hemliga kocken” by Mats Erik Nilsson, the author describes how we have lost sight of the original product and the original taste. The food is so processed that the flavor is lost along the way. Therefore, the last step before the food can be sold to the consumer is to artificially add new flavor using different chemicals and flavor enhancers. The taste is no longer genuine. Vanilla ice cream does not taste like

² Stefan Jarl, Underkastelsen, Sverige, 2010
vanilla. Smoked ham is not actually smoked, but instead ham with added smoke flavor.\textsuperscript{4} We cheat our sense of taste and we fool our own bodies and minds.

The situation around food seems to have lost control of itself. It is such a big and complicated industry and apparently even the producers of the foods have lost track of what their products contain.

Am I, as a consumer, expected to trust that the food that I can buy is genuine, healthy and nourishing for me to eat? Is it my responsibility to make sure my food is healthy even though I don’t have decision power on what the food I buy contains?

In the documentary “Underkastelsen” it is said;

“In every sample you can possible take, everywhere in the world, of air, water, soil, and even in human blood, you will find those chemicals. They exist everywhere, in every corner of Earth, everywhere.”

Scott Mabury, Professor University of Toronto.\textsuperscript{5}

It seems that, no matter how much I try to be aware of what I eat, I cannot avoid the chemicals to pass through my body.

This artistic work and this essay is about exactly that. The food we eat, the chemicals it contains and how these affect our bodies. It is as well a work where I raise my questions and elaborate thoughts about the ambivalence of the food culture I live in. Chemicals in the food are used everywhere in the world, but my starting point of investigation is the food from where I live, my food store and my situation.

I am an artist working in the field of art and craft, jewelry and corpus. In this work I take my starting point in the field of corpus and investigate how the field can help me tell my story and view on the unspoken matters of today’s food culture.

For me, a corpus piece is an object with a relationship to food and often a relationship to the table. It is an object for having food inside or food on top of, or simply a tool to eat with.

In my work I make a table setting with different objects that can help me talk about this and raise often hidden questions and facts concerning food. I see the work as one ad, from an artistic point of view, drawing attention to the ongoing discussions about today’s food non-transparent, deceitful situation. In this work I use the corpus pieces as a ground for my investigation and, together with the setting, I want

\textsuperscript{5} Stefan Jarl, Underkastelsen, Sverige, 2010
to bring my questions to an audience and make a connection to people’s own dinner tables and food habits.

This process started for me a few years ago when I first read the book “Den Hemlige Kocken”. The book discusses product by product from the shelves of our food stores, it describes the industrial process behind it and also analyzes the ingredient lists to see what is really in there. For a few years I read books and watched different documentaries about the different foods, the chemicals, the effects on human bodies and also the effects on the environment, nature and animals. I tried to examine the food I ate, started to change my own eating habits and tried to think of ways I could make a change for myself and the environment. It struck me that even if I tried really hard, to make all food myself, bake and cook, I could not escape this situation. Even if I baked my own bread I could not escape the bleaching chemical that the flour contains and plastics in the butter, long distance transportations of olive oil, pesticides in fruits and vegetables etc. I felt deceived because there were so many substances and extra ingredients that I did not put in my food myself, that someone put there for me and I could not get it out.

It worries me when I see an advertisement of a new eatable product saying “no additives or sugar added” or “genuine product”. Today it seems very important to point out, with big letters, when a product is made with no chemicals. That is something for the company to be proud of, of course, but for me it becomes like proof, that all other foods have these additives. And it says quite a lot about what kind of foods there are on the market and especially what kind of food culture is going on/we live in. Every day in different magazines and in the newspapers, we can read about different diets, health products, and life styles to gain a healthier body and a longer life. It becomes very ambivalent, if you take one of those diet products, turn it around and read the ingredient list. There is almost not a single word that is possible to understand or have a clue of what it actually is.

We have a very refined and polished idea of what we eat. Many products in the food stores are hidden behind a nice text explaining how good and fresh the product is. Or they have a picture of nature on the cover or of a happy, working farmer, to prompt us to believe in the product. Everything has to be fresh, nice and appealing to make the customer buy it. Everything needs to have the right color, right texture, right consistency and be marked with a best before date stamp. And more importantly, there can be no proof of the product’s true origin. As soon as the food is old or passed the best before date, it is thrown away. We tend to not see, everything bad or old in our environment.

In the book “Food” by Warren Belasco it is said:

“There is nothing more basic than food. Food is the first of the essentials of life, our biggest industry,
our most frequently indulged pleasure, the core of our most intimate social relationships, and perhaps the greatest cause of disease and death.”  

CORPUS AND OBJECTS FOR FOOD
If I look into the field of corpus, both historical and contemporary, I can clearly see that there is a strong connection to food within the objects, whether they are objects in direct relation to the food, used as decoration or items to have on the table. Corpus is intended as objects rising from a silversmiting tradition and most of the objects were used for serving food. I am relating to this function and aspect in my work in order to create a relation between eating habits and corpus.
To connect my thoughts about today’s food to my field of art, I started to look at what kind of objects we use today to handle food. A phenomenon concerning this, that I think is worth mentioning, is that in the 1960’s when fast food was spreading more and more, something happened with our eating habits. Fast food was a transition between two extremes: formal table settings and man’s primitive way of eating. Fast food took man back to the oldest way of eating, when food was held in hands, which was something unthinkable of a few decades ago. Food is often eaten outdoors, without cutlery, standing or sitting during disorderly and sometimes stressful conditions. Fast food made eating a more public act. Fast food cannot be carefully prepared: both preparation and eating have to be done as fast as possible. It is made to immediately satisfy your hunger without further care or thought. The elegant table setting and beautiful food trays are replaced with simple paper and plastic packaging. Fast food is a phenomenon that is of course still happening today, side by side with the more “traditional” ways of eating, at a set table. The objects we use in connection to food differ of course, if I look at different people’s homes, restaurants, canteens, at work places, cafe’s, or if I look at the table objects when watching the Nobel dinner. But no matter how the objects look like they all have the same purpose: to be used as tools for eating, to contain food or to put food on top of, and even to present the food for us.

Although the contemporary corpus is not normally used for food or even in relation to the table, you can often see the traces of the connection to food. The questions have changed and by function and material other aspects are presented. One example of this is Katherine Weelers´ objects in silver, wire,

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6 Warren Belasco, FOOD the key concepts, 2008. s.1.
7 Birgitta Castenfors, ÄtbArt
Se men inte smaka- om nästan ätbar konst, 2000. s.38.
porcelain and color. One of her objects is called Mini Teapot (fig.1), which of course refers to teapots and table objects. But the function of a teapot is no longer there.

A similar direction can be observed in one of Janine Antoni´s items. Antoni is a contemporary artist, who creates work in performance art, sculpture, and photography. Her works focus mostly on process and the transitions between the making and finished product. She often uses her whole body or different parts of it, such as her mouth, hair, eyelashes, and brain as tools and with them performs everyday activities to create her artwork. The Spoon head (fig.2) has an impression of the inside of her mouth and the handle an imprint of her mother’s hand. I would describe the spoon as a corpus object even if she works in the field of fine art. The object refers to corpus but raises issues other than that of being a functional spoon. Being fed by one’s mother is associated with being a child or baby, but the mouth imprint is of an adult.

Silver and other metals are used in the majority of contemporary corpus objects made within the field. Examples of this can be found in works from artists like Simone ten Hompel, Peter Bauhuis, or David Hyucke. Many pieces within the field show great skills in craft and mastering of a specific technique. The goal for my work is more that of referring to the concept of “conversation pieces”, rather than to tradition of silver-ware and usage.

In my project I use the field of corpus as an investigation area surrounding food culture and use the objects to create a situation around the dinner table. The story telling part is the important aspect of this

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8Simone ten Hompel, http://www.tenhompel.com/pur/works.html (25.03.13)  
9Peter Bauhuis, http://peterbauhuis.blogspot.se/ (25.03.13)  
10David Hyucke, http://www.davidhuycke.com/ (25.03.13)
work and is used to create a relation through the objects with a viewer.

In the field of corpus the word “conversation piece” is often mentioned. From a historical perspective, this kind of objects was seldom included in the actual eating experience. They were more seen as conversation starters, showing status and wealth, and stood in the middle of the table. In the 17th century, the dessert was often placed in the middle of the table and created a decorative element to enjoy while eating the meal. The 17th century table decorations were often formed out of wax, wood, sugar or marzipan and made by special craftsmen, who were highly valued for their skill.11

During the late 18th century food was carried directly from the kitchen and served to the guests at the table. This gave the table decorations a more permanent place at the table. The decorations were stationary and became the key point of the set table. Some were edible and some inedible, and even those that were made of edible materials, could be either preserved in so peculiar compositions or painted with inedible ink, so that they were not directly intended to be eaten.12 These objects were the key points of the table setting, center pieces, and nowadays we mention them as conversation pieces. As my objects, they were conversation starters in social settings around the table.

My pieces are made out of gelatin, sugar paste, lead and laboratory glass: I see them referring to the concept of “conversation pieces”. Not to show status or wealth but as conversation starters for the theme of the food we eat. The material I use is chosen for the purpose of referring to my story and that approach is for me important to use within the field of corpus.

Corpus is experienced through our bodies and through our food. We touch it to bring food into our mouth. We handle the objects, lift them, move them, fill them and empty them. They are made to be handled with our hands to serve us what we need. My objects are probably not going to be used for real, but they represent an invitation and play with people’s senses and experiences of their everyday use of similar objects. Often the pieces made within the field are not made to be used, they are more to be seen as symbols of a usage, but one example that I find fantastic from the point of actual usability, is a work by the artist Maki Okamoto. Okamoto transform the items we eat with and give them a new identity. She exhibits in contexts where the audience is supposed to eat with the objects. By using the objects, the link between the body and the act of eating becomes very distinct. (fig.3,4,5)

Often I experience a distance to corpus pieces because of the framework they are shown in, like galleries and museums. You never touch or use the objects.

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The statement from the Steinbeisser Experimental Gastronomy reads:

“Steinbeisser Experimental Gastronomy is the first in a series of evenings in the spirit of experimental gastronomy and discovering a fresh perspective on contemporary eating rituals. All the food originates from local and bio-dynamic grown grains, fruits and vegetables. The guests are invited to be part of an experience where gastronomy, philosophy, design and performance art come together. It’s a variation, an interpretation and practice of a contemporary northern European food ceremony. All ingredients are of bio-dynamic origin sourced in the Amsterdam area. The artistic intervention comes from Alexander Gershberg, Maki Okamoto and Debbie Wijskamp, who will change the eating experience in a responsive, yet thought-provoking manner.” 13

The relationship between the corpus, the food and our body is the central point in my work. In this project, the corpus is there to present the food we actually eat. It is there to help me to highlight and discuss my questions and my investigation of our food culture. Corpus is my tool and it serves as a starting point for my investigation. It is both a study in materials and a deepening of how objects can help me to tell a story.

13Maki Okamoto, http://makiokamoto.blogspot.se/2012_08_01_archive.html (25.03.13)
THE TABLE SETTING

The table is the center and basis of the meal. It is a gathering place for socializing with family and friends, the site of a meeting with colleagues or a place where you sit down and maybe meet someone for the first time. People use food to speak with each other. Food is a way to communicate. It’s a way to meet people.

My table is only for one person. It is set for one. It is set for each individual who sees it. I chose this way of presenting to make it easier for the viewer to identify with the situation. I want to raise questions such as how would it be to sit here? How would it feel to eat from this table?

I have also tried to set the table for more than one person. For a group of people and therefore more places to choose from. I’ve also tried not to have any seats at all. But in those two trials, I experienced a distance between the table and the viewer. I also wanted to avoid creating the impression that the table was set for a particular group, family, or company. Furthermore, I wanted to avoid it to be like a “still life” type of situation/presentation, where one would not feel involved but instead feel excluded and just be able to watch from a distance. If the table is set for one, it is easier to invite a person to reflect upon himself. It becomes easier to relate to your own body, your own meals and to what you eat. I use one seat simply to create a more direct connection. (Fig.6)
The first step in a table setting is to cover the table top with a cloth. The white tablecloth is 
transforming the simplest tabletop into a festive base and a clean surface. Looking at old historical 
paintings, I can see that the white cloth had an important role dating far back in time. In the 17th 
century painting by Leandro Bassano, *Antonius och Kleopatras gästabud* (fig.7), the table is set with a 
white tablecloth overlaid on several patterned cloths in the same way as a textile garb on a church altar. 

![Pehr Hilleström's painting Publik spisning på Stockholms slott from 1779](image)

The same can be observed in Pehr Hilleström’s painting *Publik spisning på Stockholms slott* from 1779 
(fig.8). Here we see clearly how the white tablecloth reflects light and interact with the table’s 
silverware.

The tablecloth had not only a hygienic function, but also gave a lighting effect. In earlier times when 
the light sources consisted of candles, the cloth acted as a reflector for the light sources and reflected 
glow on to the metal and glass objects that were placed on it. An effective way to light up and show 
what was being served.

In my table settings, there will be no cloth on the table. Especially because I associate it with fine 
dining and a tablecloth is not something I would use every day. I want to use a table that is like any 
table. A table that could be in every home and that does not take over but let the objects speak, without 
leading them onto a different story. The table is a light wooden table that is simply just a table, and 

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light in color to simultaneously highlight objects like a white tablecloth would do.

In my work, the table and the objects in relation to it are to be viewed as a whole. They'll be together when displayed and presented. I see the whole work as a common piece where the viewer is inserted into the situation. It is a symbol of what we all have in our homes, in our kitchen, dining rooms or workplaces, and is a situation we all experience daily. The dinner table is the scene and objects are the actors. They are actors and each has its own role on stage. A role play that, when brought together, gives the viewer the whole concept.
MATERIALS

The food we buy in the shops is always "polished" and refined. Raw materials are sources and all clues for us to understand their origin are removed. Everything that points to the reality is erased and the raw material is suddenly only an image of itself.

One seldom sees, for example, a piece of meat at the grocery store with a little skin or hair still on it. The meat is also dyed to achieve a more pleasing and refreshing color. The food is so processed that it is detached from its origins.

An artist working with some of these aspects is Cindy Sherman, who creates assertive photographs’ of the unpleasant elements in our every day, such as rotting left overs of food (fig.9). At the first glance, the viewer does not perceive the actual scene, but is fooled by the obvious beauty that is mediated by technique. Society’ s social structure and our habit patterns can under no circumstances be disturbed.

We handle the food with cutlery and other utensils. The food is stored in containers and there is no direct contact between the raw materials and the consumer. The food is prepared in a controlled manner, and in this way we are distancing ourselves from nature and our innate urges.16

I have chosen specific ingredients from food, like gelatin and E substances, and used them as material for some of the objects. The materials are transformed into table objects, where I let it be the most visible, nothing is deleted erased or retouched. The choice of materials in the project symbolizes different parts of the problems I feel about the food. They are chosen to function together with the objects and tell their respective part of my story.

LEAD

Lead is one of the materials I use in my investigation. It can be found everywhere in the environment, in the air, soil and water. The spread of lead in the environment has declined, partly because we now use unleaded petrol. But there is lead in most of our foods, although in low concentrations. Foods such as fish, meat, cereals, root vegetables and dairy products often contain low levels of lead. Wine may contain slightly higher levels, but the levels have declined in recent years. Shellfish, liver from wild living animals and some wild grown mushrooms can contain elevated levels of lead. Lead is a metal that is absorbed by our bodies, and if it gets there, it stays there.

The Swedish “Livsmedelsverkets” information about lead, reads: "Do not use ceramic containers and enameled vessels for food and drink if you do not know that they are safe to use for food. Lead can be leached from glaze and paint. This is especially applied on acidic foods, sour fruits, rhubarb, berries and juice. Even crystal glass contains lead, and lead concentrations may increase in spirits stored in crystal decanters for long periods”.

For me, and hopefully for many others, it would be unthinkable to eat or drink from leas vessels. But it is not inconceivable to eat all the toxins that food already contains, for we assume that we are not hurt by what we cannot see or what we do not know. Some of the items in my table setting are made of lead. Lead should be kept far from our bodies, but it is on lead that I choose to serve my food. Plates, lace tablecloths and cookie dish all made out of lead. The plates are what I serve the food upon. It’s on them that the food should rest before being eaten. (fig.10)

The objects become a symbol of the treacherous, the thing that looks beautiful but turns out to be of a completely different nature. The lead is like the “wood nymph”. It becomes a symbol of how I feel deceived by the industry's tricks to make food appear more beautiful than it actually is. Lead is gray, heavy and has a "dead" surface. It is an apathetic and nonchalant material. Lead folds like a heavy cloak over the food on my table and slowly destroys our bodies. Like many pesticides and other chemicals in food.

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17 Livsmedelsverket, http://www.slv.se/ (25.03.13)
GELATIN

Gelatin, which we often use in cakes, pastries, sweet desserts and candy, is a product extracted from pig and cow. Gelatin is used for thickness and texture in candy, as flavor and color enhancer in sausages and meat, as a stabilizer in some dairy products and as clarifying agent in wine and fruit juices. Gelatin is also used extensively in the pharmaceutical industry, as casings for various medication and vitamin pills. You can also find gelatin in hair care products, lotions, bubble bath products, camera film, paper notes, matches, cosmetics and much more. The usage is spreading far beyond our food. The material itself is pretty disgusting. It has an unclean yellow-brownish color, is a little sticky and has a stiff but soft texture. It is the visual and tactile quality that I want for the items on my table setting. Gelatin in its raw form points clearly to its origin as a product extracted from a living body. I have used gelatin in its pure form and also used candy as a material, because it contains gelatin. Some candies are quite similar to gelatin in texture, but the colors and the shapes of the pieces leave no trace of the origin of the material. In one of the objects, I used five kilograms of molten raspberry gelatin candy. Visually, this becomes a new material that you would not instantly connect with the raspberry candy, maybe not until you can sense the smell. What happens is that the molten candy is transformed into something we rather would associate with meat, the body and its inside. In this big amount, the material loses its appetizing appeal. It resembles a swollen or modified organ, a surreal image of our inside, or a reminder of our body. The raspberry candy, which in its natural form seems innocent, good and tasty, becomes intrusive and unpleasant.

An artist who worked on aspects of this and also made use of gelatin is sculptor Claes Oldenburg. He made a cast of his face in gelatin. The quivering visage was presented on a plate at an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, in the 1960s. The strange metamorphosis which his facial features went through could be interpreted as a sign of aging and impermanence. The passing of time becomes part of the artist’s message. A human is also perishable and thus binds food and human life together.

18 Äkta vara, http://www.aktavara.org/ (25.03.13)
19 Birgitta Castenfors, Se men inte smaka- om nästan ätbar konst. 2000. s 43.
I made the object in October, and since then it has not changed. (fig.11)

LABORATORY GLASS
The food we eat today is produced largely in laboratories, experimented and tested on animals. It is modified, new qualities are added and undesirable characteristics removed.
Laboratory glassware is often associated with medical research, giving it a positive image that indicates science and health. A means to bring humanity forward and that inspires hope for a longer life.
Research in laboratories, practiced by educated scholars, is generally respected. But there is a double message in the image of the laboratory.
On one hand, laboratory research, medicine and highly specialized researchers trying to find answers and cures are being generally to be considered a positive thing: on the other, they also are part of an industry that produces the opposite. Laboratory experiments produce substances for use in food that affect our bodies in negative ways; chemicals are produced that, once added to our food, give it properties we have no idea whether are dangerous for our bodies or not.20
In order to bring the connection to the laboratory directly down on the table and to our eating, I use laboratory glassware as the basis for some of the objects and turn it into objects that can be compared with the table objects we use today. I do this by employing a method similar to the experiments used in a laboratory. I modify and cross different species to produce new ones. The old features of the glass are removed and I add new ones. From being the containers for chemicals, they become those objects we now use in combination with our food. They have handles, spouts, stands to become our new table object. They speak of a truth that would otherwise be invisible. We all recognize laboratory glassware but it isn’t something we want to associate with our food. But the truth is: that’s the way it is manufactured. (fig.12)

20 Stefan Jarl, Underkastelsen, Sverige, 2010
SUGAR PASTE
Sugar paste is a material used primarily in baking, decorations for cakes, pastries and as a topping for cupcakes. I noticed the material and particularly the “phenomenon sugar paste” approximately a year ago. It came as a follow-up to the scrap-booking trend, with various blogs and forums covering this new trend; the sugar paste got its own section in hobby shops where all the necessary equipment was displayed: tools, templates, inspirational books, materials, and of course, the sugar paste itself. (fig.13,14,15,16)

I have worked in a bakery and am visually fascinated by beautiful pastries. Flat Cakes, small sweet cakes, chocolate delights.

I bought a packet of sugar paste and saw that the back of the package had a long table of contents: sugar, glucose syrup, vegetable fat (palm oil), emulsifier E 322, E 471, thickener E466, food acid E 330, flavor, humectant E422, preservative E200, colorant E 129. It ended with the text: may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children. Suddenly it felt like eating a My Little Pony.

For my table settings, I have chosen to use sugar paste as a material for some corpus objects, mainly because it is almost made of only chemicals. It is a soft and malleable paste that when solidified resembles matte porcelain. It comes in all colors but I chose to use white for an association to table items, such as plates and cups. These objects might require a list of ingredients for the viewer to understand the whole concept around them. (fig.17)
There are many examples of when we work with the aesthetics of food, cookbooks and food stores included. But one interesting example is what is called Sugar Art, in which sculptures of colored sugar and food becomes more a craft than material of nutrition. (fig.18,19)

If one were to put food on or pour liquid into objects made of sugar paste the food would absorb the material, and vice versa. It would be dissolved and mixed. The same would happen with the chemicals: They would be mixed into the foods. Both the material and the object would break apart, suggesting that the objects in use are not eternal. Even if the object doesn’t resemble anything associated with our bodies, it does carry the weight of a story of transience just as our living bodies. But it also carries a story of that is more plastic. The material, in its short history of cupcake tradition, is treacherous and not nearly as cute as it seems. There is an ambivalence in the material that is similar to the ambivalence that exists in my approach to food, and also it contains the same chemicals that we every day put in our bodies.
THE COCKTAIL EFFECT

You are what you eat.
You are your inside and your outside.
The body is a vessel for you. It contains you.
And you contain a huge amount of chemicals.

I have chosen to title my work “The Cocktail effect”.
The word describes the effect of all chemicals that we are exposed to, put together.
”The Cocktail effect” is a big subject in the documentary “Underkastelsen”. It alludes to the fact that today we know that there has only been thorough research on how artificial chemicals affect our bodies for 20% of all the chemicals used in food. On the remaining 80%, there can be found no such information. And that only regards each chemical individually, not how chemicals react when combined with each other.21 We are exposed to many different chemicals mixed together all the time.

“The Cocktail effect” in my research doesn´t only refer to the specific chemicals and how they affect us. It is also a word describing the lack in knowledge of what’s going on with our food in general. A good example is of course the horse meat scandal that I mentioned earlier in the text. “The Cocktail effect” describe everything concerning food that we cannot control or that we don´t want to see.
In my work I highlight the standards of our food and make objects out of specific ingredients that foods contain and use facts of how it is manufactured. I am also referencing ongoing trends concerning cooking and baking to create a meeting point and to identify with a viewer.

I set my table with a cocktail of objects,
And let the beauty meet the beast.

21 Jarl Stefan, Underkastelsen, Sverige, 2010
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Fig 4, Maki Okamoto; http://makiokamoto.blogspot.se/
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Fig 6, Private picture, work in progress
Fig 7, Leandro Bassano; http://tinyyokum.blogspot.se/2010/04/masterdetektiven-tar-emot.html
Fig 8, Pehr Hilleström; http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Hillestr%C3%B6m_slottsinteri%C3%B6r.jpg
Fig 9, Cindy Sherman; http://www.escapeintolife.com
Fig 10, Private picture, work in progress
Fig 11, Private picture, work in progress
Fig 12, Private picture, work in progress