



THE NEW WAVE

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FRANCE'S CUTTING EDGE / 4

EDIBLE METAPHORS

Last autumn, Zelda Georgel, a young Parisian artist whose present work consists of photographs of female storefront mannequins immersed in ethereal woody settings at the 'meeting of paths' between modern digital photography and Alice Through the Looking Glass quaintness, decided to branch out into a more multi-sensory mode of expression. To this end, she recreated via a series of mini installation pieces, the mossy, leafy atmosphere of the woods she visited when taking her latest neo-surrealist photographs. Finally, and this is where the 'food into art' connection comes in – she called upon a chef, asking him to participate in a joint performance, conceiving conceptual 'nibbles' inspired by this complementary combination of photographic images and three-dimensional 'memory capsules'.

Visitors to the event, held at the La Découpe art space, were treated to a memorably poetic sensorial experience on the lines of what experimental filmmaker Peter Kubelka would describe as an 'edible metaphor'. A kindred spirit, Kubelka sees filmmaking as "the construction of an artificial flow":

a metaphor for the cooking process or the evolution of early man, "moving through the woods walking on moss, always ready to move from one species to next"...

The chef, Jean Roucheteau – now at the helm of the Lancaster Hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant, run by Michel Troisgros, but having grown up in the countryside – was sensitive to the evocation of leaf-strewn footpaths. Hence his choice of ingredients "that taste woody": truffles, Japanese shiso basil, crisp mouth-sized crackers, and... a subtle lime green emulsion, akin to molecular gels. 'Munching' into these contrasting textures echoed the thrill of treading on crackling leaves, when strolling through the woods, as well as the words of Hervé This: "From an early age, consciousness of food begins with recognition and there can be no recognition without contrasts." Of mushrooms he says, "A basketful of mushrooms should always remind us of the fact that it's only at the cost of many human lives that we were able to determine which of them were edible." ■

