

A Futurist's Cookbook

Composition and text by Philip Samartzis
Photo essay by Daniela d'Arielli



Optimism at the table

This project emerges from a one-week residency I undertook at Pollinaria, a sprawling farm located at the base of Gran Sasso National Park in Abruzzo. The residency coincided with the summer harvest providing an opportunity for a variety of sound recordings of agricultural infrastructure, including complex machinery used to transform unrefined crops into processed foods. Most of the fieldwork was undertaken in the company of Daniela d'Arielli who navigated the winding and undulating topography while I searched for sounds residing in the dry pastoral landscape. During our field trips Daniela would photograph the places, objects and people we encountered. Often embedded in the landscape, hidden from view, shooting from a distance with a macro lens. The images accompanying the composition are designed to reveal the richly textured environments in which we worked.

The title *A Futurist's Cookbook* is a reference to the provocative manifesto *The Futurist Cookbook* written by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, circa 1932 – a treatise that drew on food as a raw material for art and cultural commentary. Marinetti's clever use of the cookbook format to advance collective artistic consciousness appeals to my sense of the absurd. In spite of the misogynist sentiments, perverse speculations and nationalist impulses, Marinetti's musings provide shrewd observations of contemporary life. While the Futurists often privileged the urban as the bastion of technology, disruption and noise, the rural offers an equally complex soundscape of natural, geophysical and industrial sound. *A Futurist's Cookbook* is an expression of the exuberant noise and dynamism permeating throughout the countryside. One as thrilling and sensual as anything the discordant city can utter. It is also an affectionate tribute to the regional traditions of Abruzzo, and the futurist farmers working to preserve them. After all only a futurist meal can lift spirits.

Philip Samartzis

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A Futurist's Cookbook

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| 1. Mountains | 3,15 |
| 2. Harvest | 5'12 |
| 3. Mill | 6'18 |
| 4. Weather | 7'02 |
| 5. Vineyard | 7'22 |
| 6. Factory | 5'05 |
| 7. Night | 4'21 |

Text performed by Daniela d'Arielli / Recorded by Fabio Perletta

Key Words: mountains, air, dry, harvest, mill, noise, insects, cavity, sea, sky, valley, fields, trees, fences, factory, machines, resonance, repetition, wind

A Futurist's Cookbook

Recipes for a catastrophe



Image: Philip Samartzis

SUNDAY JUNE 25, 2017

Edible landscape

Pollinaria is an organic farm west of Pescara in the central Italian region of Abruzzo. The farm is spread across rolling hills and valleys and overlooks the Adriatic Sea some 20 kilometers away. Pollinaria is focused on preserving traditional farming practices, and primarily grows olives and wheat for oil and pasta production. Large swathes of the property comprise woodlands, although there is also an orchard of walnut, cherry and fig trees, and a small vineyard. The farm is located at the base of Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park, the site of a recent earthquake and avalanche that killed 29 people at the nearby Hotel Rigopiano. It was the deadliest avalanche to occur in Italy since the White Friday avalanches in 1916. In the distance are the Marsicani Mountains, which rise beyond 2000 metres. The weather is hot and still with various insects resounding across the property. Farm machinery sounds in the distance. Various wasp nests line the interior of the 19th century farmhouse, their buzzing occasionally appearing from the roof to break the quiet. At dusk a large gale appears suddenly from the direction of Gran Sasso, violently transforming the idyllic setting. The cool wind gusting through various trees and fields. Their shrieks pierce the night.



Image: Philip Samartzis

WEDNESDAY JUNE 28, 2017

Nutritious noises

Today we travelled up to Lake Penne Reserve to record a mill used to process various grains grown in the area. The reserve is used for environmental research and education into sustainable tourism, renewable energy, organic farming, and the preservation of local traditions. The mill has an amazing array of machines used to sort, clean and crush grain into flour. The din is extraordinary. The mill overlooks steep hills of wheat due to be harvested in the coming weeks. While walking through the yellow fields a squall suddenly appears from the direction of Gran Sasso. The wind quickly activates the wheat into swirling waves of brittle sound. It hasn't rained here for months and the ground is filled with deep cracks. From the direction of the mountains comes a succession of explosions. Overhead the sky is filled at regular intervals by aircraft travelling to Russia or Croatia. We set off down the mountain with the wind growing in intensity. Everywhere trees and shrubs are shuddering ferociously – while branches and leaves blow erratically across undulating roads. Stark evidence of the recent earthquakes is everywhere – with large sections of the road in disrepair, or consumed completely by the landscape.



Image: Philip Samartzis

FRIDAY JUNE 30, 2017

A broth of roses

Today we travelled to Parco Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga to record sheep and cattle grazing on the lush plateau located 2000 metres above sea level. Along the way we pass through several medieval towns sitting precariously atop rocky outcrops. Vertically arranged in clusters, their stone facades blend seamlessly into the eroded limestone mountainside, which they straddle. Many of the buildings are either abandoned or for sale. The remote location, harsh climate, and history of earthquakes seem to have taken their toll on these regional communities. The rutted roads continue to be challenging as we precariously wind through the mountain range towards Gran Sasso. We stop several times to record the sound of wind blowing across the grassy valley. Along the way we meet a shepherd with several Maremmano-Abruzzese sheepdogs in tow. Further on we come across a dispersed herd of cattle, their bells gently ringing through the valley. At times the collective interplay of the strangely dissonant ringing reminds me of the overtones generated by a gamelan. After some hours we finally reach the immense pastures of the Campo Imperatore plateau situated at an elevation of 2200 metres near the massif of Gran Sasso, which is dramatically shrouded in cloud. Overlooking the impressive scenery is L' Hotel Campo Imperatore, which was Benito Mussolini's prison between 28 August and 12 September 1943 before being liberated by Waffen-SS commandos. The decrepit hotel façade provides an apt reminder of the sordid history of this place of exile. While taking in the rugged scenery I think about Pier Paolo Pasolini's acerbic observations of corruption and despotism chronicled in *Salò*.



Image: Philip Samartzis

SUNDAY JULY 2, 2017

Coffee and desert

Today I am presenting a concert in the courtyard of the ancient Palazzo Baldini Palladini Amorotti, a 16th century monastery located in the mostly abandoned medieval centre of Loreto Aprutino. The antique building is in various states of decay - with many windows and shutters cracked or broken. The modest courtyard has tight acoustics due to the uneven pavement, textured surfaces and potted plants. An ancient well is lodged into one corner hidden by a small door. The action of drawing water over centuries has cut deep grooves into the stone. Nervous pigeons fly around the rooftop. A series of stone steps steeply descend down into the dark cellar where stainless steel vats and oak barrels of fermenting wine sit within the original architectural framework of the space. It is cool and extremely quiet with many original features still intact such as the vaulted ceilings, paving and stone wash basin. A dramatic summer thunderstorm suddenly appears from the direction of Gran Sasso inundating the region with long anticipated sheets of rain and hail. The storm is spectacular with bolts of lightening regularly piercing the black sky for over an hour. Once the storm clears I present a series of sound recordings of the region focusing on the effects of weather on the rural environment and the agricultural processes used to cultivate the land. The presentation is occasionally punctuated by the tolling of bells of the nearby church, as well as the pigeons, excited by the sounds appearing in their space. A local curator specializing in Joseph Beuys tells me afterwards how much he enjoyed the concert. After explaining Beuys's long connection with Abruzzo he offers to drive me to dinner in his new open top MG sports car. As we speed through the dark and deserted streets - wind blowing through our hair - I feel the urge to replace the cool jazz playing over the sound system with Scott Walker's *A Farmer in the City*.



Image: Philip Samartzis

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