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Artists's Recipes Book Launch  
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## CURRIES, STEWS, AND AN ABRAMOVIC APHRODISIAC: ADMIR JAHIC AND COMENIUS ROETHLISBERGER DISCUSS THEIR BOOK OF ARTISTS' RECIPES

A few weeks ago, the Swiss Institute finally managed to buy grasshoppers for an upcoming event. The following night, the New York institution was going to host the United States book launch of Swiss artists Admir Jahic and Comenius Roethlisberger's *Artists' Recipes*, and the grasshoppers were needed to make Pedro Reyes's burger, which the artist dubs "The Grasshopper." Alison Coplan, the assistant curator at the Swiss Institute, was tasked with finding the six-legged critters—she tried buying them online, but that failed, so she purchased them from a Mexican restaurant. (She asked me not to name which.) With the grasshoppers finally secured, the Jahic and Roethlisberger duo was happy.

"It's a burger, but there's not infrastructure to do a burger, so we decided we're going to make a chipotle mayonnaise and the grasshoppers, which you can dip and try," Jahic said. "Imagine that you would do this at home, like, 'Oh, what should I cook tonight?'"

Most people might not make a Grasshopper after a long day at work, but some of the 80 other recipes in *Artists' Recipes* are a little easier. There's Olaf Breuning's "Salad (*my usual lunch*)," which requires "Whatever you find fresh!" and maybe a beet or an egg. Not too many pages later, Judith Bernstein shares her secret for how to make a good banana sandwich. More seasoned chefs may want to try Subodh Gupta's goan prawn curry, Julia Dault's Moroccan chickpea-and-vegetable stew, Claire Fontaine's ricotta balls, or Bob and Roberta Smith's roasted pheasant.

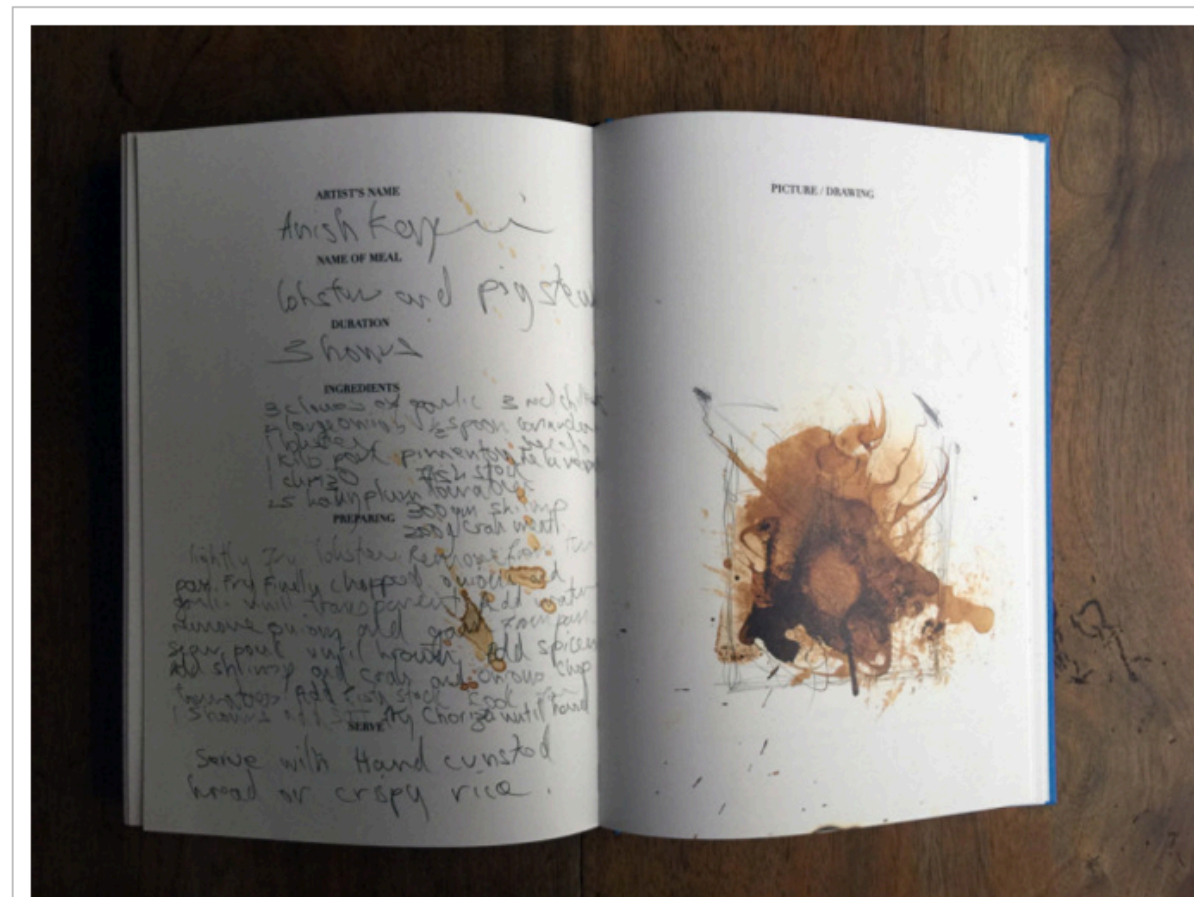
When I sat down with Jahic, Roethlisberger, and Coplan, the artists explained to me that they set out with a basic question: What do artists make for dinner? "We love to cook, we love to eat—it's the first thing we do in the morning," Roethlisberger said. "Other people see this as being our work more than we do. Personally, we just love food, and we are the artists."

The process behind the book was fairly hands-off—Jahic and Roethlisberger wrote up a template that asked artists to submit the name of their meal, the ingredients and steps used to make it, and an original work to go with their recipe. Artists would then scan their handwritten responses and mail them back to Jahic and Roethlisberger.



COURTESY BOLO PUBLISHING

"We didn't know what was going to come back," Jahic said. "So there's this excitement every time you open the mail and there is something in there. Then you read the name. If it's Hermann Nitsch, you're like, 'Oh, my God, that must be bloody or something!' And then you open it, and you're totally surprised, because it turned out to be completely something else." Nitsch's recipe isn't for a raw hunk of meat, as you might expect, but rather for bread with butter and chives. He'd like you to serve it on a porcelain plate.



Anish Kapoor's recipe for lobster and pig stew.

At the start of the book's production, the Swiss Institute's chairwoman, Fabienne Abrecht, helped Jahic and Roethlisberger reach out to artists. The duo knew it would need heavy-hitters, like Rirkrit Tiravanija and Ólafur Eliásson, to get other artists on board, and Abrecht was helpful in that respect. But once they started sending out the template, Jahic and Roethlisberger kept getting put in touch with new artists. The duo said that Ryan Gander, who previously edited a cookbook of artists' cocktails, told them, "Hey, guys, I love this project. I'm into it, but hey, contact Jesse Wine. He loves to cook." So Jahic and Roethlisberger passed the template along to Wine, who makes a mean Warrington Salad, or a mix of potato chips and peanuts. Jahic and Roethlisberger also spoke to a friend who put the artists in touch with the assistant to Marina Abramovic, who then submitted her recipe for an aphrodisiac.

"It started to become something where you can't control it anymore, and that's where it starts to get interesting," Jahic said. "You lose this control, and things are happening around you. But it's impossible to do with all these people around [us]. That's what we love about food—the social component."



Roethlisberger and Jahic.  
COURTESY SWISS INSTITUTE

One of the artists' favorites isn't a solo affair. For Erwin Wurm's dessert "...," apricot jam is spread across a piece of paper, and then someone is invited to eat it off. "We say to our friends, 'You are the artist now,' and then they lick all this jam from the paper, and it's almost like a social thing," Jahic said.

Roethlisberger is a fan of the Toiletpaper recipe for tomato sauce. Proportions aren't given for the recipe, thought up by Pierpaolo Ferrari and perennial art-world jokester Maurizio Cattelan, who put out a magazine under that name, but Roethlisberger assured me that the latter is "a brilliant cook. Before he was into art, he worked in gastronomy and food."

I asked which recipe I should try first. They told me to go for Jo Baer's "Whiteonwhitesalad," a recipe for a

modified version of tuna salad that was originally meant for an artists' recipes book for the Museum of Modern Art in New York back in the early 1970s. (The book was never published.) "Eat, enjoy and remember Malevich for his genius for titles fondly," Baer writes at the end of her recipe.

Were there any artists Jahic and Roethlisberger wanted to include but who don't appear in the book? "Oh, sure," Roethlisberger said. "There are artists we'd love to ask, and who we love a lot."

"Jake and Dinos Chapman would be in here, but they missed the deadline, and we couldn't wait," Jahic added.

"*Artists' Recipes 2!*" Coplan exclaimed.

Jahic chuckled and said, "In ten years."