

## Y2U3 Projection<sup>1</sup> Project Proposal

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For Unit 2, I have learned to observe things from different perspectives and distances. I can focus on a specific object, moment, time, or location, or step back to see the bigger picture. The film Powers of Ten™, with its unique perspective, explores how images at different scales and contexts alter our perception. This has prompted me to think about shifting perspectives—from the macro to the micro and back again, essentially zooming in and out.

Growing up in a traditional Chinese family, I want to use zooming in as my method of exploration this time, observing how people build emotional connections during meals through body language and food sharing.

Margaret Visser states: "It is now permissible only where there is considerable intimacy for fellow diners to give each other 'tastes' from their plates. Correct behaviour guarantees the absolute sovereignty of every diner over his or her domain: the individual plate in its designated 'place,' an area of the table safely bordered by its metal implements and impermeable to incursions from without, except for supplies and replenishments of food as permission for these is given." This suggests that individual plates at the dining table are considered "private territory." When people in close relationships share food, they do so by entering each other's private space, fostering emotional bonds. This is different from how waiters serve customers since service does not involve entering this personal space to distribute food.

Influenced by Confucian traditions, expressions of love in Chinese families tend to be subtle and restrained. Instead of verbalizing affection, love is often conveyed through daily care or dining rituals. "For most Chinese people, sharing a meal and eating from the same dish signifies an honored

interpersonal connection... In China, round tables or 八仙桌 (eight-immortal tables) are used, ensuring an equal distance between each individual and the dishes in the center, creating a sense of fairness. The act of taking food is also a process of 'sharing,' connecting all individuals at the table through the division of food. Thus, 'communal eating' can be seen as a metaphor for interpersonal intimacy."

I have observed that we often overlook nonverbal interactions at the dining table. For instance, parents may pick out their children's favorite dishes,

remove shells from seafood, or prepare food in a considerate manner. These small gestures, though subtle, are powerful symbols of care and warmth, forming an invisible bridge of love between family members, friends, and partners.

The project Dining Disorder focuses on tracking dining behaviors, recording hand movements at the table to create visualized “table path” images. This inspired me to use path tracking as a research method, as these gestures are often expressed through hand movements. Similarly, Bruno Munari collected and analyzed common Italian hand gestures in a dictionary format, deepening my understanding of gestures as nonverbal communication symbols.

Additionally, “The proposal is not to invent a new tool, but rather to focus on the tactility of food-making and sharing, in its most simple, intimate, and domestic form.” This highlights the need to return to handmade processes, emphasizing direct interactions between people and food, as well as among individuals. Cooking and eating together—whether with family or friends—create moments of connection.

Therefore, I aim to use hand movement tracking as my perspective for visual experimentation, potentially exploring various handcrafted visualization techniques such as photography, screen printing, textile materials, illustration, and cyanotype printing. Sarah Espeute, for instance, preserves memories through embroidery on fabric or tablecloths, evoking a nostalgic and intimate atmosphere reminiscent of past family life. Similarly, Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* utilizes embroidery as a visual language, reinforcing my belief that fabric carries strong emotional significance as a medium. This has inspired me to experiment with textiles in my own project.

Additionally, the artist Evgenia Efstathiou uses cyanotype printing to emphasize absence and the unseen, which closely aligns with my project. I hope to reveal the unnoticed, delicate details at the dining table and bring them into focus, as cyanotype is fundamentally about seeing the unseen.

*The Romance of Food* explores how food carries emotions, culture, and memory, transforming an individual’s dining experience beyond the physical realm into an expression of identity and sentiment. Moreover, “Food sharing is undertaken for and with others; reshaping relations with both human and non-human entities and tangible and intangible resources.” This statement highlights that food sharing not only fosters interpersonal relationships but also involves interactions with the environment, objects, and cultural resources, giving food broader social and symbolic meanings.

Research also suggests: “The literature in our synthesis demonstrates that food is a powerful tool for creating and maintaining relationships. Those

narratives which focus on self-cook facilities and the social groups formed around cooking and eating demonstrate the benefits of peer support to prisoners' sense of well-being... It can lead to improved health, well-being, self-esteem, and confidence.” In unique environments such as prisons, self-cooking and communal dining enhance one's sense of belonging, self-worth, and happiness, further proving the role of food-sharing in fostering social connections and psychological well-being.

Eventually, through this project, I hope to bridge the gap between personal experience and artistic expression, prompting viewers to re-examine how food and table etiquette shape emotional connections. By making these often overlooked behaviors visible, I hope to inspire people to value these everyday cares and convey that sharing food is not just about survival, but that it carries relationships, memories, and love between people.

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