

## Interview with India Rose Klap

Realized by Rose Merriman  
on the occasion of the exhibition

### ***WATER(PROOF)***

11 August – 15 September 2019

At MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin

<http://momentumworldwide.org/exhibitions/waterproof/>

Curated by Rachel Rits-Volloch & Tainá Guedes

I met India Rose Klap at the Momentum Worldwide gallery. She had arrived a few hours earlier in Berlin with her partner. It was a sunny day, we decided to go outside to do the interview. We sat on a rickety wooden bench underneath some trees at the back of Kunstquartier Bethanien. It was the week before the opening of Water(Proof), where India would be performing Plastic Soup.



My first question to India was if she would describe herself as a food artist.

“Yes, I would. Two years ago, I don’t think I would of necessarily. I would describe myself as a conceptual artist but for the last two years I have been busy with just food and topics regarding food. I also think that that will be what I am doing for the future.

I asked her why she focuses on food as her medium and subject of choice. Food has always been a big part of her life and growing up.

“My father is a chef; he has had restaurants from when I was very little up to now. I have been inside kitchens for most of my life. From when I was about 15 years old, I started really working with him. Being in a kitchen with him and being surrounded by people who know a lot about food and think a lot about food. I think it wasn’t really an option for me.” She laughs. “I really like cooking; I really like thinking about where you get ingredients

from. So yeah, I had all this inspiration around me, and I just used it. And with food, you can grab it, you can eat it. It's really physical and I like that aspect too. You can make great ideas and have everything in your head but it's great if you can make it super, super physical in a way that everyone can relate too. Everyone eats and everyone will understand up to a certain point what you are talking about as they are familiar with food, more then they might be familiar with painting for instance."



India was in art school and had been busy combining food and art in her practice for a while. However, as her time in art school was nearing it's end, she hit a wall in her practice.

"...I was stuck." India said. "I had to make my last project for school, something that you must work on for a year. I really didn't know what to do. And then I watched a Dutch television programme, where they take a certain type of food each week and they see if the way the supermarkets sells it is true. For instance, low-fat milk, is it really low-fat? and what are the consequences? It looked critically at a lot of different stuff. I binge-watched that series. It made me think, art is interesting, and food is interesting, maybe looking at it critically is the most interesting thing to do. I started to think a lot about food topics I wanted to talk about in an artsy and critical way. "

The idea of doing something with edible plastic came to her suddenly.

"The Plastic Soup idea was just a side idea. At first, I was thinking about making a book about critical food design, and then I had wanted to put the book in something. It can't be plastic, it can't be paper, what should it be? Then suddenly I had this idea of a bag that was maybe edible. I began to think about it more and more, about the idea of an edible plastic bag and it became way bigger than the original project."

One of the challenges with Plastic Soup was finding a material that felt and looked like plastic.

"It was hard to make a bag that looked like plastic and that was edible in a way .It took me one and a half years to find people that were able to do it, because I don't have the chemistry background at all. I just read a lot about it. Back then, I had to search days and days on the internet. I had never been on the 20th page of Google before then. Now if you just search edible plastic, you have companies who are making edible foils that look like plastic. I think there are..." She pauses. "...about 20 times as many companies busy making biodegradable plastics now. There are a lot of companies right now doing research and making on bio plastics. Bio plastics at its core are almost always edible in some way, as they are made from completely natural products. It was hard to make a bag that looked like plastic and that was edible in a way. Then there

was this company that tried to make a plastic bag as natural as possible and what is really great about it is that it looks plastic and really feels like it but you would never be able to use it as when it gets wet it disintegrates. It's a great idea for my concept as it works well but as a bag it doesn't work that well. It is really the image that works but it is not that practical."

My next and last question was if climate change was a common theme in her work.



"In the beginning of my practice it was more about food. The Plastic Soup project came in, which is narrowly related with climate change in a way but also with the impact plastics have on nature. When you work with that (subject) a lot, you become surrounded by a lot of people who think about climate change and you begin think a lot about it yourself.

"I wouldn't describe the Plastic Soup project at its core as a project about climate change, it is more about the ecological impact of plastic. Now I organise dinners where there are four or five courses of food, with Plastic Soup being one. I have two other courses that are really about the impact of climate change on food. I have one course that is completely based on the idea that the Netherlands (where India is from) will be flooded if the sea level keeps rising. This will have a huge impact on crops and what type of food you will find in and around the city. That is what I am busy with right now, it is more focused on climate change then Plastic Soup project was."

With these dinners, each course shows a different future of what could happen to the food we eat if we don't act.

"There is the plastic soup that portrays a world where there is a lot of plastic and we don't do anything about it. There is the course about the rising sea levels, but I also have a course that goes back to 300 years ago and looks at how chefs worked then. I took that and modernised it so for instance, I have this recipe from a Dutch cookbook from 1650 and made it modern, using super local foods. We also have a dish that is more pharmaceutical. So, you take certain aspects of something, like a berry and you see what you can extract from it, to either make it taste better. It's all different outlooks on the future of food. Some are more socially critical; some are more environmentally critical. "