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(FAST) FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Christopher Jury Morgan

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As has happened with many other aspects of 20th century culture, fast food has been gentrified and ironically parodied relentlessly in the last two decades: gourmet burger joints; premium pizza parlors and responsibly sourced, independent kebab shops are only some of the products of this 21st century reimagining.

Whilst these adaptations give new significance to the phenomenon of fast food, they do little to alter its wider impact: the industry continues to affect cultures, physiologies and psychologies around the world. The impacts of this consumerist trend are many and varied – from the health complications such consumption invites, to the economic impact of the lengthy supply chains involved and the ecological upheaval caused by the intensive



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We humans have been decorating our private

agriculture and animal husbandry entailed.

Whatever your opinion on the industry may

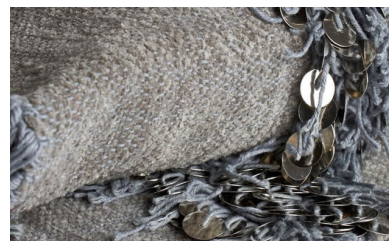
be, there's no denying its global impact.



(<https://maisonnumen.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/fast-food-for-thought-6.jpg>)

Ben Frost's McDonald's Fry Containers, 2013

One aspect of the fast food revolution that has inspired artists and artisans around the world is the ubiquitous packaging in which it comes: those humble cardboard, paper and polystyrene receptacles which can be seen strewn in gutters, bins and landfills everywhere. From Andy Warhol – the original satirist of 20th century consumerism; to **Ana Gomez** (<https://maisonnumen.com/product/talavera->



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South of Europe's southernmost tip, beyond where the mighty Atlantic meets the mild

combo/) – a Mexican maker with a will to challenge the consumptive culture that’s wreaking havoc on her country: the packaging in which these commodified calories come has been a gateway to explore the wider implications they pose.



(<https://maisonnumen.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/fast-food-for-thought-3.jpg>)

Andy Warhol Eating a Burger, 1982



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One of the most poignant aspects of this trend in art and design is the contrast in value assigned to inspirational material and inspired product: Moschino makes and sells a bag for hundreds of dollars whilst its muse is readily provided – filled with fries – for a few cents and is then thoughtlessly discarded smeared with grease, salt and ketchup. **Ana Gomez** (<https://maisonnumen.com/product/talavera-combo/>) draws on the rich heritage of artisanal production that is **Talavera pottery** (<https://maisonnumen.com/product-tag/talavera/>) in order to recreate items which litter the sidewalks and gutters of the streets outside her workshop. On the one hand we have the figureheads of aesthetics – paragons of design that inform our collective tastes. On the other we have the faceless foot soldiers of consumerism, lined up in their disposable multitudes to satisfy our fleeting desires.



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Moschino FW 2014

The discrepancy between these two ends of consumerism serves to give us pause for thought: what are the longer term impacts of our consumption? What will these practices do to our cultures, our planet and our futures?

These are difficult questions with no easy

answers, yet they are questions we cannot avoid: these synced makers, working in unknowing tandem around the world, all force us to face up to the issues of our contemporary world.



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