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Art x Food: How Artists Use Food to Cook Up New Work

By Andrew Russeth
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As the world of art broadens its borders and sets its sights on all realms of culture, ARTnews surveyed collaborations of various kinds for the August/September issue of the magazine. Stay tuned as roundups related to different categories—Art x Fashion, Art x Music, Art x Science, Art x Food, and Artists x Artists—join related feature stories online in the weeks to come.



Josh Kline's USA Today al Dente, from 2021.

PHOTO ALLYSON VIEIRA/COURTESY 47 CANAL AND ALWAYS FRESH, NEW YORK

Josh Kline x Pasta

In 2014 Josh Kline placed a refrigerator on the High Line in Manhattan and filled it with sleek bottles of brightly colored juice. They looked delectable—until you read the ingredients on their labels. A richly textured green beverage included baby spinach, baby kale, tennis ball, and Nyquil. A purple number featured coconut water, turmeric, yoga mat, and glass. To prevent accidental imbibing, the doors on the work, titled *Skittles*, were locked shut.

“Taste, and the role it plays in capitalism, has been a theme in my work from the beginning,” Kline said of his interest in substances that “we use to alter our bodies.” His distinctive brews of edible and otherwise questionable and even poisonous materials can be both unsettling and poignant. *Energy Drip*, one of Kline’s works from 2013, is an IV bag with a dark-tangerine liquid made of Red Bull, Provigil (a pill that treats narcolepsy), and gasoline—a menacing monument to overworked truck drivers or coders, or their fuel.

In a less liquid pursuit, Kline tried his hand at noodles a few years ago, assembling a dish with squid ink and pages of the *New York Times*. And so, when artist Allyson Vieira and writer Brian Droitcour (from the *ARTnews* sister publication, *Art in America*) approached him about participating in a group exhibition this past spring at Always Fresh, a space in a former pizzeria on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, Kline thought about making some pasta—“this time using *USA Today* with hand sanitizer and crushed Tylenol,” he said.

The artist’s studio assistants—“all serious about food and quite skilled in the kitchen,” Kline said—created the dried pasta and crushed the pills. It was an ephemeral piece, with pappardelle being cooked up each morning of the exhibition’s monthlong run and then discarded at the end of the day. The result engendered simultaneous sensations of pleasure and disgust, sending the mind into a tailspin. “It’s a pasta about 2021,” Kline said.