
THE FRAGILE FEAST

ROUTES TO FERRAN ADRIÀ

HANNAH COLLINS



© The seaweed. Galicia, Spain. Hannah Collins, 2010-2011

Spurred on by her close ties to Barcelona and Ferran Adrià, in 2010 Hannah Collins embarked on a journey through Europe, Latin America and Japan to trace the origins of these ingredients and capture their mysterious essence. Along the way she took photographs and uncovered the distinctive memories of a series of unique culinary features in Ferran Adrià's cuisine.

The Fragile Feast comprises 250 photographs that also appear in an engaging, highly detailed book she has written exploring the origins, handling and tastes of thirty ingredients used by Ferran Adrià – chef at El Bulli restaurant – in his cuisine.

The images taken on Hannah Collins' culinary journey make it clear that memory and background are the keys to appreciating

Ferran Adrià's creations. The photographs capture the place of origin and the process of transformation and preparation in the chef's kitchen for each and every one of the ingredients, most of which are produced by small family businesses around the world. The book also contains a detailed passage on each ingredient describing the work carried out by fishermen, hunters, cattle raisers, farmers and gatherers and includes maps

pinpointing the origin of each product. Hannah Collins' images and texts make it a unique work, an historical document and a tool for rethinking concepts in the culinary world.

Hannah Collins' developing journey got under way many years ago during her first visit to La Boqueria market in Barcelona. The sumptuously arranged produce and the broken line of different seasons on display spurred Hannah to explore the fragile relationships between growth, supply and consumption.

For *The Fragile Feast* she photographed sea anemones from Cádiz, kudzu from Japan, honey from nomadic bees in Italy and pine trees from the Pyrenees, amongst other raw materials, to reflect the process for preparing 35 dishes by the world-renowned Catalan chef. In doing so, these local delicacies are co-opted into a much wider culinary language that reveals nature's elegance and wisdom in its creations and shows the creative transformation wrought by the alchemist chef who studies and combines them.

"Whenever we analyse a dish or a style, we focus on composition and technique, even on the precise combination of products, but we rarely stop to think that there is a story behind each ingredient", says Ferran Adrià when describing Hannah Collins' photographic commission. "And that is precisely what Hannah has done: to portray the behind-the-scenes story of each and every one of these ingredients, to follow the thread of a whole series of emblematic products all the way back to their origin, each one with its own specific area and people who have worked with it for a long time, very often following ancestral techniques handed down from generation to generation", he adds.

The lesson and legacy of *The Fragile Feast* sparks a powerful synergy between the visual and culinary arts and stresses the great role played by small things in our everyday lives, as reflected in a series of photographs that not only draw in the eye, but also tempt readers to touch, smell and taste every ingredient portrayed.

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Hannah Collins (London, 1956) lives and works between London and Barcelona. Her work as an artist, photographer and filmmaker centres on the collective experiences of memory, history and everyday life and has been exhibited at the Art Museum at the National University of Colombia (Bogotá), Caixaforum (Barcelona and Madrid), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Artium (Vitoria), La Laboral (Gijón), CAC (Málaga), VOX image contemporaine (Montreal), Centre national de la photographie (Paris), Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin) and Tate Modern (London), amongst other museums and art centres. Her work forms part of several collections, including the Deutsche Bank Collection (London), Fundación Botín (Santander), Fundació Banc Sabadell (Barcelona), MACBA (Barcelona), Maison européenne de la photographie (Paris), Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes, MNCARS (Madrid), the European Parliament (Strasbourg), Tate Gallery (London), MUDAM (Luxembourg) and the Walker Art Museum (Minneapolis), amongst others.

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