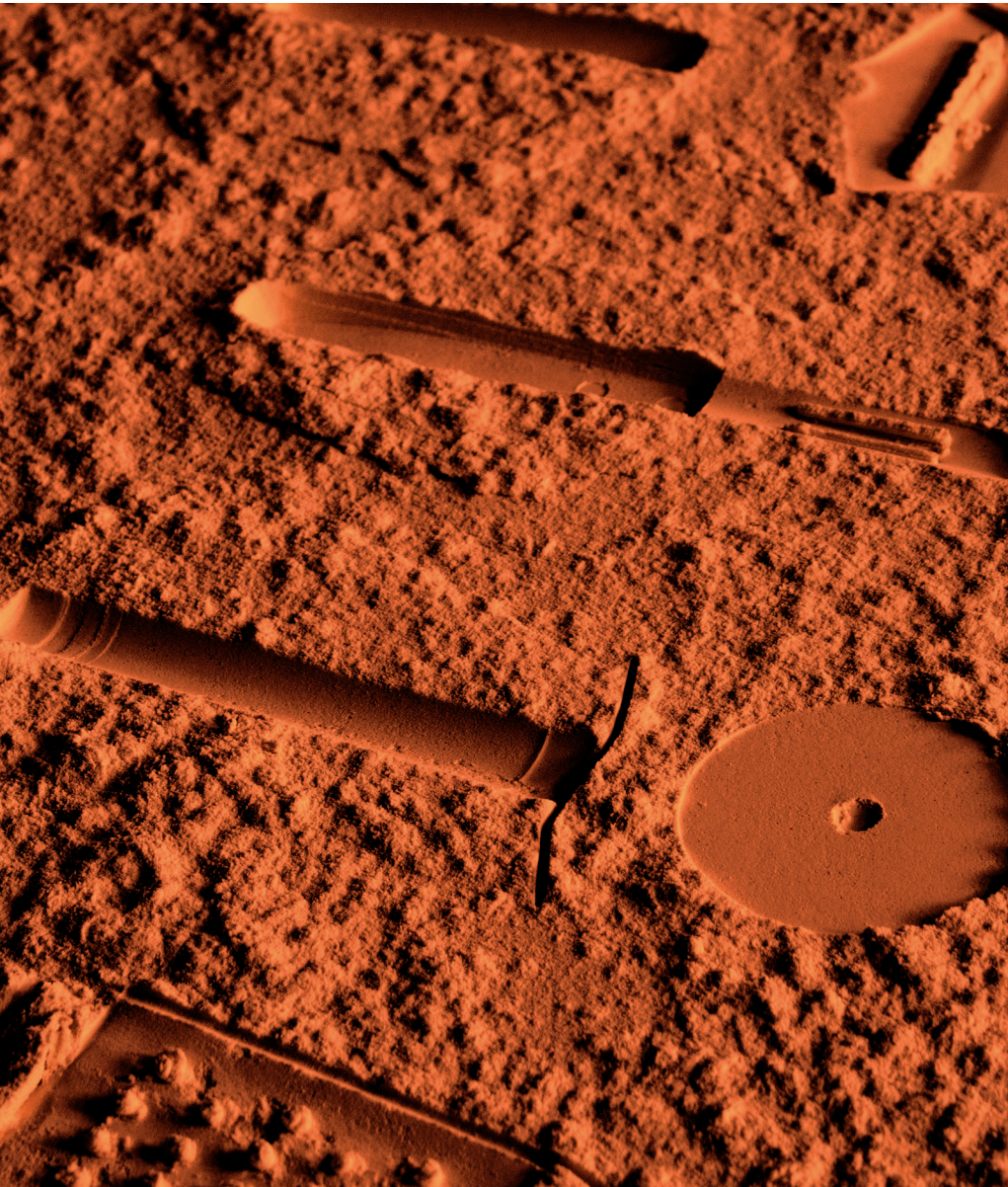
USERS' INVOLVEMENT
FOR BETTER COOKERY PRACTICES



USERS' INVOLVEMENT
FOR BETTER COOKERY PRACTICES

Research work in design
Léonie Bonnet - DSAA 2017 / 2018

This abstract presents a piece of research in design carried out under the supervision of Julien Borie and Laurence Pache in Dsaa eco-conception and sustainable development in Raymond Loewy school.

Picture on the cover : *Regain Tools,* © Léonie Bonnet, 2018.
This photograph was taken during a workshop with Antti Ahtiluoto in January 2018.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my supervisors Julien Borie and Laurence Pache for their commitment, their contribution to my research, their receptiveness and wise advice.

Many thanks to the teaching team for their knowledge and advice.

I also want to thank Catherine Pradeau for her help and receptiveness.

Finally, I want to thank my classmates and Clément for their support.

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FOREWORD

Since I started practicing design, I have thought that it's possible to influence the ways we live through the objects we use. Who asks if an object or a behaviour could have harmful consequences for the environment or people? I consider it important to inquire if design can rethink daily uses in order to develop better behaviours and what means can be implemented to make behaviours change without imposing a conduct to people. It also seems necessary to refuse to design objects for their appearance, because this leads people to be interested only in the image conveyed by the objects. This is a real stake to make people understand that design has the power to prompt small but significant changes.

INTRODUCTION

For sure, domestic appliances for cooking are a means to save time. But it's important to consider the other side of their use : if users transfer the preparation of meals to appliances, they no longer need know-how in cooking. Moreover, most of the time, appliances don't leave so much freedom in cooking's practices. This lack of control leads users to grant less importance to what they eat, to food resources and to the ecological balance of their consumption behaviours.
Food is a primary need. Food and cooking are also a source of daily pleasure and can bring social bond. Finally, food is linked to choices about our ways of life and it's a means to assert ethical or ecological choices for a better life. Users' involvement in cooking is important because to be physically involved in such an act provides knowledge, control on what we eat and users' interest in cooking as a pleasant practice. This involvement can raise users' awareness.

In this research, we ask to what extent designers could get users involve through devices to develop better cooking practices and become more aware.We attempt to involve users, by their gestures as means to link physical involvement and reflection. Meanwhile, we wish to question the means to improve cooking practices and to erase behaviours conditioned by the use of appliances.

First, we will study how domestic appliances are used by people and what experience it represents to them. Then, we will compare users' relation to processed food, especially in the USA, and people's relation to food in Italy through the slow food movement. Finally, we will study what design means could involve users in cooking practices.

1. USE OF APPLIANCES TODAY

LOSING CONTROL IN THE USE OF APPLIANCES

Appliances* used at home, especially for food, allow to save time. They are very convenient and easy to use*, they don't require effort or a lot of gestures to be used. In the sixties, the slogan of Moulinex, a French brand of electrical appliances for cooking was that appliances freed women from household tasks to give them much free time fig.1. For sure, today one cannot deny that these appliances have benefits. They provide comfort everyday with the result that today, the well-being at home is reached thanks to the transfer of users' daily actions to appliances, with less time granted to actions. Users want to maximize their daily time and they wonder if it's really worth doing something such as cooking by themselves.
Jean Baudrillard wrote that only users' body extremities are involved in the use of domestic appliances, without any effort : pressing a button, checking the sound or watching the appliance[1]. Today users just need to control the appliance by switching on the appliance to use it fig.2. In this way, the appliance easily responds to users' gestures and desire, without requiring their physical effort. Users feel as if they totally controlled their appliances. So, the comfort provided by the simplicity of using, makes users feel they have power on appliances. However, this control is fake because users can't really control the object, since they can't repair it if it's broken. Matthew Crawford explains this idea through the example of an automatic tap : if the tap detector is broken and can't detect the users' hands, the users don't understand the breakdown and

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* Vocabulary page 35.

1. Jean Baudrillard, *Le système des objets*, 1968, pages 68-69.
Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) was a French philosopher.

how to solve it. They may be frustrated as the water is not coming while they move their hands in front of the tap detector. They wonder why the handle has been removed and what kind of magic controls the tap water. Users can then realize they absolutely don't control this appliance[2]. If the act of cooking is transferred to an appliance such as a food processor, the different stages of the process are completed by one appliance.
The automatic food processor cooks for a few hours by itself, thus the users' sensitive contact with food becomes very poor. Similarly, with an appliance like a Nespresso coffee machine, when users are preparing a coffee, they can't smell, touch or see the coffee because the coffee as an ingredient is hidden in a little capsule and then disappears in the appliance. The sounds made by the coffee machine are different from those when we make* coffee without the appliance : we hear the sound of the machine instead of the sound of the boiling water. We can ask if the change of the sensitive experience in the preparation of meals could modify users' attention to what they eat and the time devoted to it. Users' awareness and care disappear in front of the convenience and comfort provided by the use of appliances. So, the use of appliances in cooking may also change users' awareness about the environmental consequences of such appliances that produce waste and use electricity. Indeed, they could use old tools that still exist and need no energy except for human power, that produce less waste and that can be long-lasting because they are simple and easy to repair. In this context, it's important to involve* users physically in the cooking. Designers can rethink devices*, therefore rethink users' gestures to empower them to control what they eat and to raise their awareness in their daily actions. There is another stake for designers, which is to value the sensitive pleasure provided by the physical contact with food as a daily pleasure.

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2. Matthew Crawford, *L'éloge du carburateur, essai sur le sens et la valeur du travail*, 2010, page 69.
Matthew B. Crawford (1965) is an American philosopher, researcher and motorcycle mechanic. He promotes theories that deal with the meaning of labour and the individual in modern society.

Fig. 1. An old French advertisement *Moulinex freed women*, 1957, © All rights reserved.

fig. 2. *Nespresso U : directions for use*, 2013, Youtube, © All rights reserved.

APPLIANCES ARE COMPLEX TO UNDERSTAND

Appliances seem to be very simple. In French design, the term "affordance" is used to talk about an object which reveals its use through its shape. This word comes from the verb "to afford".
The use of appliances is very intuitive, however "affordance" shows how to use appliances but not how they work. Jean-Pierre Séris wrote that appliances in daily life have two particularities : their functioning is complicated but they are so user-friendly that users don't need skills to use them[3]. On the one hand, it's very convenient because no one needs knowledge to use them, on the other hand, no one can fix them if they break down, unless one is a technician. Indeed, appliances are like black boxes which hide their systems. This complexity creates a gap between users and them.
Unlike a traditional recipe divided into several stages, with an appliance users can't see nor understand the link between their gesture, like pushing a button, and the result. For instance, in a Nespresso coffee machine, all the process is hidden in the appliance (to fill, to heat water, to brew…). If users make a coffee with another device, such as an Italian coffee maker or a French press which need to be handled, the several stages of making coffee are visible and understandable. In this case, users are makers instead of being spectators of the coffee machine. With these devices, they have more freedom in the use, for example they can measure out the quantity of coffee they want whereas, with the Nespresso coffee machine, everything is planned to let users only press the button and consume [fig.3]. The gap between users and appliances lead users to attach more importance to its appearance and shape than its functioning. This feeling gets users to be enchanted with appliances : if they can't understand these objects, they believe in their performance. Through technology appliances, users believe in progress as an improvement of comfort and life quality in their home. This is an widespread belief that goes in one direction and leaves no space for questions or alternative ways of progress with technical everyday objects, which may be environmentally better. If users don't understand their everyday appliances, they are indifferent to them and they can't be aware of the consequences of their use. Designers should contribute to a better understanding of everyday life devices and enable users to understand their functioning. They can do this by choosing transparency, they can design simple devices and thinking about the consequences of the use of devices (waste, electricity consumption).

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3. Jean-Pierre Séris, *La technique*, 2013, page 5.
Jean-Pierre Séris (1941-1994) was teacher in philosophy at Panthéon-Sorbonne University in Paris where he lead the philosophy and history institute of science and techniques.

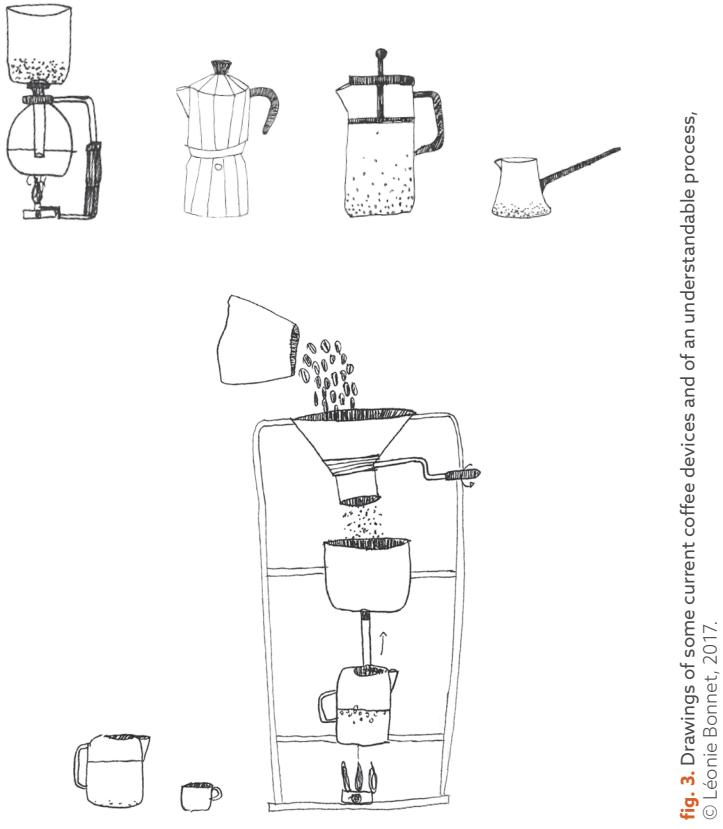

fig. 3. Drawings of some current coffee devices and of an understandable process, © Léonie Bonnet, 2017.

USING DOES NOT GIVE USERS CHOICES

Appliances are too complex, so their use has to be shown. We can consider that designing the use is a way to impose behaviours to users. Pierre-Damien Huyghe wrote about the use through the example of a digital camera. According to him, adjustments are already chosen so users don't have so much freedom in terms of decision [4]. It's surely more convenient for users to avoid settings, they save time and it's easier to use, however they don't question the appliance. For sure, it's always possible to choose another program and refuse the original settings but the lack of possibility of adjustment reduces users' creativity and above all users' attention during the time of settings and so the importance granted to the moment of taking the photograph. They can take more than one hundred photographs instead of setting the camera and taking ten good ones. Because of the lack of adjustment possibilities on the appliance, the use is very poor because it's a way to exclude users' questioning, users' decision, interest and personal creative capacities. It's about the same experience when users cook with appliances, they are not empowered to make decisions.

We can wonder if the objects that we use make an enriching experience possible, and give users some knowledge. To practice [*] a device is different than use an appliance. Albert Borgmann, quoted by Matthew Crawford in his book [5], contrasts a musical instrument and an appliance to listen to music. We can link this example with the opposition between use and practice : according to him, when users are listening to music on an appliance they have a passive behaviour, whereas when they practice music, they are physically

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4. Pierre-Damien Huyghe, *À quoi tient le design- Entretiens*, 2014, page 19. Pierre-Damien Huyghe is a french researcher and teacher at Panthéon-Sorbonne University in Paris. He develop his researches on philosophy and aesthetic through the technique.

5. Matthew Crawford, *Op.cit* p.10, page 80.

involved and they are also involved in terms of knowledge and attention. Furthermore, the musical instrument is open to multiple possibilities of practices, which are not predetermined. It enables users to acquire knowledge with pleasure through a singular experience which can be shared with other people. This is not possible with an appliance because everything is decided in advance and standardized. It is close to consumer goods because it doesn't enable people to actively learn or feel something, it just allows them to receive a short pleasure which disappears after it has been consumed. Could the use of appliances and the lack of possibilities to choose lead users to accept to lose knowledge and skills ? To know how to prepare food is not necessary anymore if appliances do it for users. There is a loss of empowerment, know-how and so users tend to become dependent on appliances.
Designers should propose enriching practices with devices.
They should deliberately design objects that can be used in more than one way. They have to enable users to learn and take possession of objects by finding their own ways to use them.

2. CAN USERS BE INVOLVED WITH ALL SORTS OF FOOD ?

PROCESSED FOOD FOR TIME-SAVING

We wonder how users involvement could be linked to their being aware of what they eat and its consequences.
In the nineteen-fifties and sixties, new ways of eating appeared such as fast food, processed food * or frozen food. They were a response to a new faster lifestyle in which time prevails, and to the need for instant meals [6]. The moment granted to cook has lost its true value. This food and way of eating are a part of the daily routine of some people. An American article compares the relation between American and French or Italian people have with food. It says that people in the USA eat more processed food and takeaway food, is relatively important since, for some people, it's a part of the daily routine. According to the article, eating fast is a part of the American culture and taking time to cook at home is quite unusual for the majority of american people [7]. When people eat processed food, it doesn't make them thinking about what they eat and consequences. It just makes them consume. According to the article, food is a big part of the French culture. Some Americans think that cooking and eating are like a past time and a pleasure in France [8]. However, in France too, taking time to cook and being aware on food produces is not the everyday life of french people. Most of us buy convenience food if we don't have time to cook or don't see the benefits of cooking.
For sure, in the USA, in Italy and in France, some people doesn't care about the food they eat. But another issue is that of social inequalities : people who have money can take care about food and they can buy fresh food, like vegetables, to cook. People whose can't afford fresh food doesn't care about benefits of taking time to cook, especially in the USA.

SLOW FOOD FOR AWARENESS

Since 1980's, Slow food has been an international movement which aims to make people aware of what they eat and which promotes the importance of eating local food. It strives to preserve traditional and cultural cooking. Its goals of sustainable foods and promotion of local farming and producers is linked with a political involvement against globalization of food production[9]. This movement came from Italy. This is no surprising because slow food is a real way of life in this country before being an identified movement. Food is linked to nutrition and pleasure and it's a big part of social and cultural history[10]. The moment of cooking and the products are important for most of Italian people. Some objects show a long time of preparation. For instance, some Italian people use an Italian coffee maker and refuse instant coffee. One of them told that this object gave him pleasure because of the time he spent making the coffee. He said that he can control the preparation[11].

In 2013 , an exhibition untitled *L'essenza e l'eccesso* (*essence and excess*), conceived and curated by Paolo Ulian, an italian designer, aimed to make visitors think about the bad habits that many simply ignore, the consequences of these behaviours, and how it is possible to influence these habits through the act of "making". This exhibition was not focused particularly on food but on the time and tools dedicated to make things. The exhibition was made up of pairs of objects that have the same function. One represents "excess" and the other "essence" [fig.4]. According to Paolo Ulian, the "excess" object is a symbol of consumerism, it appears today like indispensable to daily life, and ignores the fact that there are other solutions already available. On the contrary, an "essence" object is the result of a conscious and responsible production that cares for the environment and does not have bad consequences[12].
The exhibition communicated the importance of making by oneself as a design choice. Paolo Ulian wrote about self-production, meaning making food, care products, gardening products by oneself. According to him, self-production allows people to save money, to get free from the dependence on the industrial production system, to obtain better quality products, to reduce waste and impact on environment and to do away with packaging. Above all, self-production makes them aware of their own skills and knowledge[13]. Making and getting involved appear as a response for responsible choices and as a way to raise awareness and consciousness on true values.

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6. Gérard Laizé , Frédéric Loeb, Olivier Waché, *Se nourrir, de la nécessité à la convivialité*, 2010.

7. Amy S. Choi, *What Americans can learn from other food cultures*, 2014, ideas.ted.com

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Wikipedia.fr*

10. Amy S. Choi, *Op.cit* p.15.

11. This information comes from a personal experience during an internship in Milan in 2017.

12. Paolo Ulian, *L'essenza e l'eccesso*, 2013, page 8.

13. *Ibid.*, page 16.

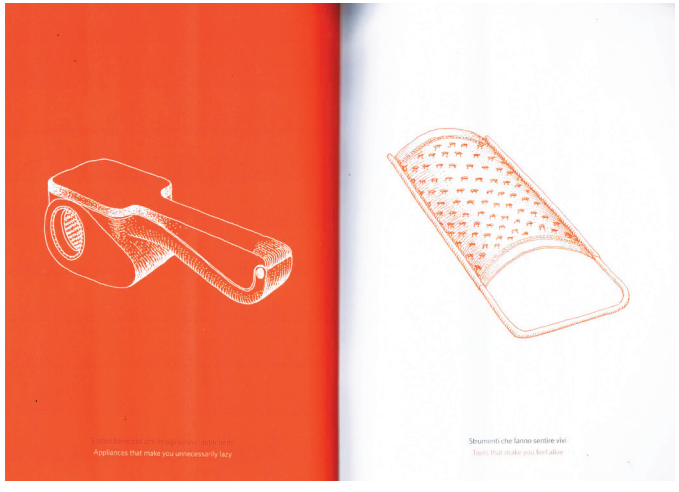

fig. 4. © Paolo Ulian, *L'essenza e l'eccesso*, 2013.

(Left) *"Appliances that make you unnecessarily lazy."*
(Right) "*Tools that make you feel alive."*

3. MEANS TO INVOLVE USERS

THE IMPORTANCE OF SENSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

Some projects highlight the importance of developing sensitive perceptions in the process of making.
Tamara Dean establishes a link between know-how and direct contact with produces in the process of making, without using domestic appliances. According to her, feeling the preparation enables makers to really control the process. She wrote about the example of a chef: "he realized that he could better gauge the quality of his chutneys and sauces when he mixed them in a bike-powered blender, because he could sense their thickness from the resistance to his pedaling. The same for a soap maker who mixes soaps and salves in a large bycicle- powered blender. He said if the soap is mixed too long, it will be spoiled, and as long as he is pedal-powering a batch he can feel when it's time to stop. An electric machine wouldn't offer such control"[14]. The human-powered devices value human capacity to make through the body thanks to simple mechanical systems. Moreover, they enable people to repair them easily.
Phillipe Delerm, a french author, underlines the importance of another parameter which is the sensitive pleasure with ingredients. He wrote about shelling peas and the feelings of their sweetness when we put his hands into the salad bowl[15]. This sensitive satisfaction is absent in the use of domestic appliances.

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14. Tamara Dean, *The human-powered home – choosing muscles over motors*, 2008, pages 1-2.
Tamara Dean in an American engineer and writer. She designs human-powered devices which she uses daily for cooking and gardening.

15. Philippe, Delerm, *Aider à écosser des petits pois*, dans *La première gorgée de bière et autres plaisirs minuscules*, 1997, pages 13-14.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SENSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

Isabelle Daëron, a french designer, values the link between physical involvement and awareness : to make gestures enables users to be conscious and mindful. In the project *Topiques insectes* [fig.5] she developed a system of irrigation for insects, which links a water source to a flowers field. Passers-by are invited to pump water to bring it to the plants. Through this gesture, they are conscious that they help the cultivation and pollination, so it contributes to raising awareness about the environment and biodiversity.
Pierre-Damien Huyghe highlights a proximity between the different meanings of the french verb *réaliser*. The verb means to make or to produce. He said that the other meaning of *réaliser* is close to the english meaning of *to realize*. This proximity reveals that making things enable users to be aware of what they are doing [16]. Generating sensitive perceptions and handling are very important to have control, pleasure and awareness concerning what we eat. With tools that users will handle, designers can enable users to develop perceptions.

fig. 5. © Isabelle Daëron, *Topiques insectes*, 2014.

16. Pierre-Damien Huyghe, *À quoi tient le design - Poussées techniques, conduite de découverte*, 2014, page 43.

TO HANDLE PARTS OF THE DEVICE

If users want to handle different tools for cooking, they need more space in the kitchen and designers need to provide them with more objects. Benjamin Mazoin, a French designer, worked on multifunctionality for his diploma project[fig.6]. He proposed a system of domestic appliances more long-lasting. It is made up of one part which is the basis of the device, it's a motor and a resistance, and several pieces which bring functionality to the system. Users have to choose between these different parts and build the device to use it. This project is interesting because it gives users the possibilty to choose the function according to their needs. Thus, users cannot have a passive behaviours and just use the device, on the contrary they have to handle some pieces and ectually build the device. Thus, they acquire technical skills and a better understanding of the domestic device.
Designers can imagine tools for the kitchen, which once they are combined with one basis, will complete several functions like cutting, blending, ... This system could enable each user to use the tools they need, in case several users live in a shared flat and cook in the same place but cook different food and don't need the same tools.
This system could also allow to save material and space.

fig.6. © Benjamin Mazoin, *Objectomie*, 2011.

A COMPLETE PROCESS

Mirko Ihrig, a German designer, made a criticism of the consumers' lack of knowledge concerning the food they eat and on their lack of interest about the origin of their food. This criticism is, above all, about fast food and processed food consumed every day. The result is that the knowledge about basic food production is disappearing. He proposes a project entitled *Bread from scratch* [fig.7], which enables users to make bread. Each stage of the making process gets visualized to enable to users to understand it. Then, through a range of tools (a mill to grind flour, a board to knead the dough, an oven to bake the bread…), users acquire knowledge on making bread. This project is a way to involve users, in order to give them control on food. Contrary to processed food ready to be consumed, here, users' physical involvement, through the different tools, makes them realize what is going on. It also means of pleasure and interest : designers give tools to users, then, they can bake bread or cook other food as they want, they can improvise and finally really practice cooking.

fig. 7. © Mirko Ihrig, *Bread from scratch*, 2012.

TO ENABLE USERS TO CHOOSE AND SET

The last necessary parameter is to let users choose and set. It means that designers don't conceive an object which is produced and then ready to be used, but they should design a kitchen system which can be adapted to each user. Pierre-Damien Huyghe said that our technical objects don't suit us anymore. We need to find another system to use these objects and to see to it that "our lives become existences with these objects". The author establishes a difference between to live and to exist : to exist is about choosing and planning what we want to do ; to live is about to not choose and to have a passive behaviour[17]. We think about our domestic appliances. So we wonder how to let users choose and how not to give them a kitchen to use but how to design a place to let them practice cooking how they want to, with all the needs they could have according to the situations and food preferences. Collectif BAM is a French organization of young designers. In the project *Biceps Cultivatus* [fig.8], they have developed three modules in order to rethink practices in the kitchen with possibilities to cultivate vegetables and herbs, to conserve with an alternative to an electrical fridge, to cook through a human-powered device. They don't give users a product but some modules through plans in open source. Users are enabled to build modules and they are free to set them the way they want. This project shows an alternative way of designing products and it changes uses into practices[*]. This positioning is necessary for a sustainable design. Moreover, it seems to be a good way to propose others behaviours of cooking in the domestic field.

fig. 8. © Collectif BAM, *Biceps Cultivatus*, 2015.

17. *Op.cit.* p.24, page 17.

CONCLUSION

To involve users in cooking, we saw that devices can take more space and more time in the preparation of meals. It can be seen as a constraint, but it appears as a necessary way to make people aware of what they eat and to allow them to see the true value of food ressources. On the contrary, transferring the preparation and the know-how in cooking to domestic appliances, with the reduction of gestures and the time granted to the preparation, doesn't permit users to be aware of the basic food issues. For this, designers can design simple tools for cooking and they have to design a kitchen space, dedicated to making, that should be adjustable and that users can adapt to their needs. They can design new devices to change the experience of cooking, to develop pleasure and consideration for cooking in order to enable users to see the cooking time as a value.

VOCABULARY

AN APPLIANCE is an object used at home which is aimed to fulfil a specific task. Its use is oriented and it doesn't always need users' handling, it can be stand-alone.

A DEVICE is the word to denote an object which is not an appliance, which is more open and can be handled or set and which have several pieces.

THE INVOLVEMENT is when users's behaviour is not passive. They are aware through gestures, attention and thought.

TO MAKE is the action which enable users to be aware of what they are doing.

TO PRACTICE is from the latin terms *practice* and *praxis* which mean an active life and action. We say that users "practice a device" when the way to use the device is not single. There are several potential possibilities to use it, or pratice it and users decide about it. They are involve in the use, they improve their knowledge or skills and sometimes we can say that it's linked to pleasure. For instance, we practice an musical instrument, but we use an appliance to listen to music.

THE PROCESSED FOOD or convenience food is the food which is already transformed and ready to consume without requiring preparation.

TO USE is the action when users use an object with a purpose. The way of using is predeterminated. Users don't pay attention to it.

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FIG.5 : ISABELLEDAERON.COM
FIG.6 : BENJAMINMAZOIN.COM
FIG.7 : MIRKOIHRIG.COM
FIG.8 : COLLECTIFBAM.FR

Editing work : Léonie Bonnet
Fonts : Andralis, Azo Sans
Papers : Amber Graphic
Printed in May 2018 in Raymond Loewy school in La Souterraine.

Abstract printed in 3 exemplaries for the High Diploma in Applied Arts specialising in eco-design and sustainable development - Pole of design of the region Nouvelle Aquitaine, School Raymond Loewy in La Souterraine.

LÉONIE BONNET

RESEARCH WORK IN DESIGN - DSAA 2017 / 2018

Domestic appliances aim to make things convenient, to make us save time and to prompt immediate results in our everyday life. We use them without so much physical involvement or many gestures. When users push a button, they feel they control the object, however, appliances are so complex that users cannot even repair them if they are broken. Cooking is easier thanks to domestic appliances when some stages of recipes are completed by domestic appliances. However, less time and fewer gestures are granted to cooking, it means less attention and less knowledge is dedicated to cooking. In this quest for comfort thanks to appliances, the lack of involvement doesn't allow users to be aware of basic food issues and to care about food ressources.

This abstract questions users' involvement in cooking through their gestures, and cooking as a physical act which raises consciousness. The aim for designers is to rethink the experience of preparing meals in order to make users interested in, and aware of what they eat and to generate conscious and responsible cooking practices. To address this question, we propose to designing tools which are simple objects that connect users to food and do not require other energy than human-power to be used. The point is to empower users by providing them with devices that can be used in more than one way. These means enhance the value of the time spent to cook and of food as a ressource.