

Academy of Design and Crafts
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The Expanding table
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The Expanding table

The Expanding Table was a workshop / performance by Carl-Johan Skogh and Mattias Gunnarsson during Gothenburg Design Festival / HDK Open House with the focus of the materiality and possibilities of food. Ten tables, built for the occasion and each containing different stations, were lined up and the participants moved along each of the sides like in a factory line or buffet taking part of the various tasks that the tables offered. The goal of the work was both to materialize and show the extra curriculum course EAT and that the relation food + design is present at HDK. Thru an easy access process we invited the visitors to the HDK Open house to participate in a discussion about design and materiality.

The event took place 11.00 – 15.30 in the HDK Aula and around 130 people participated during the day.

The Expanding Table is a part of the extra curriculum course EAT with an invitation to students to participate. The objective of the course is to examine food as a material and eating as a concept by using design as a tool. Through practical exercises, lectures, seminars and study visits, the student is given an in-depth and broadened understanding of food culture as a phenomenon in a contemporary context. By focusing on food culture and food as a material we examine a both broad and deep landscape of cultures, politics, sensuousness and experiences. Together we explore design with its methods and possibilities to form the food culture and its practice.

The Food

We worked only with vegan food and without nuts, to make sure that as many as possible felt invited to the table. Ingredients were fresh vegetables, fruit, root vegetables, bread, sprouts, and various spreads like humus and soy cream cheese. The soup served at the end table was made with carrots, oranges, ginger and chili.

The tables

The tables are 81 cm high and the top is 60 x 120 cm. The base is constructed from wooden laths (25 x 25 mm) and the top is birch plywood. The table tops are resting loose on the base so they can be moved, re-placed and re-programmed during the project. We built the tables for the occasion to make sure we got the expression, functionality and spatial qualities we aimed for.

Table 1

Cardboard squares 9x9 cm, toasted bread 4x4 cm, serving tray

Table 2

Preparation material in various bowls and jars.

Hummus x 2, soy based cream cheese, pickled red onion, beetroot sprouts, bean sprouts, later in the day: blue sugar

Tweezers, spoons

Table 3

Added edible material pinned in thin steel piano-threads (height 23 cm) set in a symmetric pattern 5 x 11

Three kinds of tomatoes, dried figs, soybeans, sugar snaps, olives, popcorn, melon

Table 4

Double sized table /120 x 120 cm)

Drawing station with four spots (one in each corner) and a podium.

Square drawing paper 46 x 46 cm, a podium in the middle, a variety of black markers

Table 5

Adding to someone else's plate, for two people on opposite sides.

Balancing table by Sofia Florell, chefs tweezers, bowls in the middle with strings of carrot, beetroot, parsnip

Table 6

Photo studio for two people on opposite sides of table.

Podiums in wood, 9 x 9 cm, backdrop in colored paper, lamp and metal paper clips.
#eathdk written on table (for Instagram)

Table 7

End table with soup, cooking plate, paper cups and rubber stamp.

Spicy carrot soup, served in white paper cups with roasted pumpkin seeds. Rubber stamp with #eathdk to stamp cardboard plate after finishing meal.

Table 8

Ping-Pong table

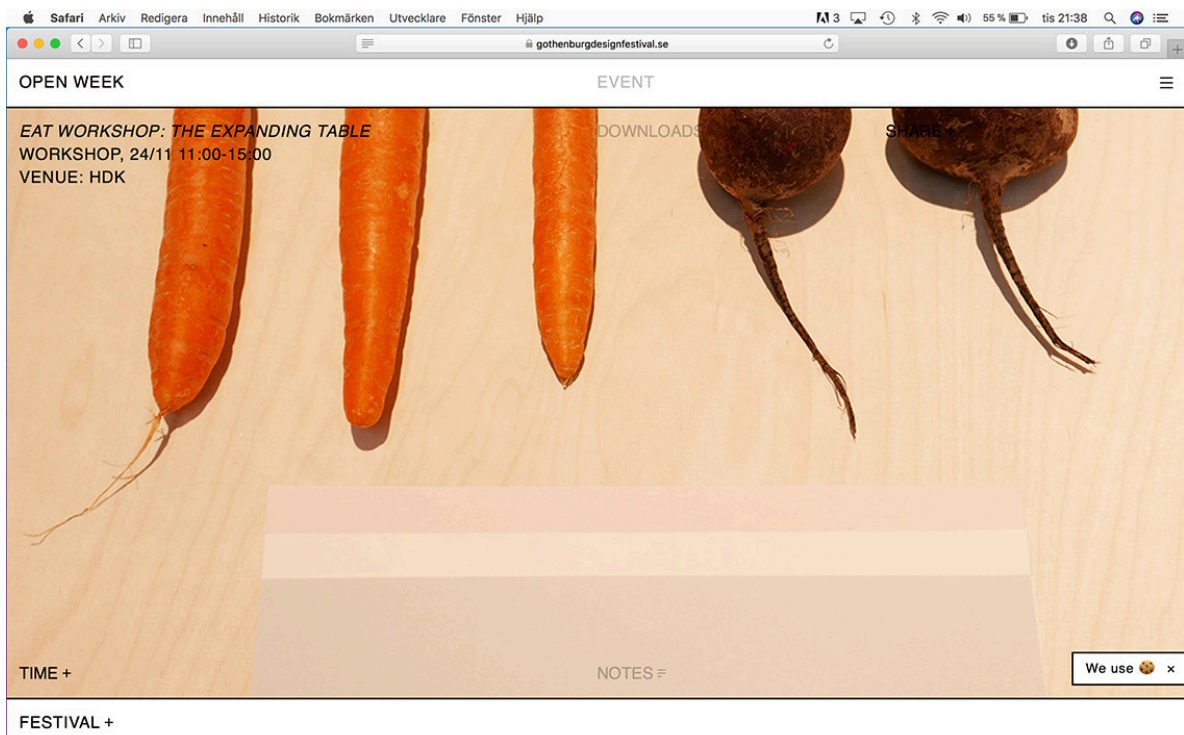
White tape, paper net, pink ball and red pads.

When soup was out (table 7) it was replaced by the Ping-Pong table.

Table 9

Project table run by Agnese Priekule with leftover bread donated from store, cooking plats, melted sugar and kitchen coloring.

Toasted bread as building blocks / material for sculptures, melted sugar as glue.



What happened?

There was a steady flow of people going thru the event during the day, both students and teachers at HDK as well as visitors at the Open House. The tables are constructed to be flexible and open for possible change during the workshop, and we did one shift in the flow, and we added the Ping-Pong table when soup ran out, but after that we realized we would need more hands to be able to keep up an interesting shifting process. Also we decided to hang the drawings that the participants did along the sides of the space, closing it in even better creating a clear dedicated space for the event as well as showing the progress during the day.

Food is something that everyone can, and have to, relate to. Everyone understands the concept of food as it connects to our senses, history, culture (-s), future, politics etc and therefore it has a great potential as a starting point for meeting and raising questions. For us in the course EAT, and in The Expanding Table, food and its extended materiality works as a medium to examine how and when design is used and applied as a tool for exploration.



