

Hannah Collins

The Fragile Feast, Ferran Adrià, 2011

This introduction was written for The Fragile Feast published by Hatje Cantz in 2011 .

Hannah Collins' book is unique. Not only because of the brilliant concept, but because of the special sensibility, the privileged eye, that Hannah possesses. She captures those elements that are most essential, most hidden and at the same time most natural in daily life. In fact, it is the most important contribution that has been made to the dialogue between art and high cooking.

I realise that when we analyse a dish or a style of cooking, we notice composition and technique, but rarely do we realise that the product we are eating has a history. Hannah has portrayed what lies behind each of these ingredients and has pulled on the threads until the origins of a series of emblematic products have been revealed. Each product implies a territory and reflects the people who have worked it for many years, often following ancestral techniques and procedures. She has chosen rare and unusual things. So she has travelled to Colombia in search of the producers of *lulos*, to Japan to see where *miso* and *wasabi* come from, to Greece for *bottarga*, to Ecuador for roses or cane, to Piedmonte for honey and even to Wales for water with unique qualities. The world is wide and in each corner a product is created that is worth searching for, but our immediate environment is also a protagonist. From Galicia comes seaweed and *percebes*; from Cadiz, sea anemones; and from Salamanca, a sublime ham. And even closer still, a few metres away from the kitchen at elBulli are pine nuts, *espadenyes*, pumpkin, sheep's milk, ceps. In some dishes we even use the earth.

The result is a beautiful story, which I have never seen before in any book. It forms a trajectory that only Hannah Collins could create with such naturalness, such poetry, and with as much truth as we find in these pages.

FERRAN ADRIÀ