

The taste of differences

The meeting *Love Difference and sweets as cultural passports* organised by Love Difference at the CAMEC in La Spezia represents the first event of the Love Difference Pastry project. The international meeting was born after the idea of Michelangelo Pistoletto to use ice-cream and sweets in general as carriers of a message about dialogue between cultures. Love Difference planned and coordinated three days of work with the aim to ideate and develop together the project. At the CAMEC the idea of a net of Love Difference Pastry was presented and discussed. Love Difference Pastries as places where the differences are tasted, as spaces that plan and realize artistic and cultural activities, which promote dialog. Through an open call Love Differences collected and selected the first proposals for the pastry and invited the authors to this appointment in La Spezia. The group established in this way is heterogeneous (artists, architects, art critics, photographers, dancers, chefs, confectioners, anthropologists, economists and researchers) and the proposed sweets carry a message of cultural encounter in divers ways: through the combination of ingredients tied symbolically to different gastronomic traditions, by means of a preparation that activates a participated modality between people belonging to diverse communities or the cultural significance of a sweet, recognized as a part of a tradition, that becomes redefined thanks to the relation and the dialogue.

Arrived in La Spezia the participants cooked and presented their proposals during the first day of tasting. During the second day a first structure for the network of the Love Difference Pastries was presented to the participants. Love Difference Pastry was defined as "places that give the possibility to taste the differences, spaces of encounter and dialogue placed in diverse countries parting from the Mediterranean area. It will be possible to taste in these Pastries sweets from the *Love Difference Collection*: a selection of the pastry's products born to communicate how the relation and the act of sharing are fundamental pillars to establish a plural society. At the same time the Love Difference Pastries create, promote and host cultural – artistic encounters, debates, exhibitions, didactic activities and laboratories, that involve in the most widen way possible the local communities about the importance of the dialogue between cultures.

In each pastry laboratories are going to be opened and, through the creativity of art, will involve the territory in order to bring new sweet proposals to life. The aim of the net of Pastries is to activate a Parliament understood as a place/places of talking, a dialogue between people. In this spirit the pastries want to become spaces of sharing where art and creativity contribute to the responsible development of society". The group that participates at the encounter is invited to discuss the vision and the content at the base of the design by means of series of experiences of shared planning. From the discussion the social role of the kitchen emerges clearly. The concept that we are going to relate here in succession is particularly interesting: if we believe that gastronomy determinates the identity of an individual, then in order to promote the dialogue between cultures we have to *deconstruct* this matter. Food is charged with over-structure, bonds of belonging to a cultural identity. To deconstruct this does not mean to research the traditional roots of a dish, but to find the historical – cultural path that brought a momentary cultural contextualition to food's current evolution.

It results evident during the debate how Love Difference Pastry operates to innovate and valorize gastronomy, specifically sweet, as holder of dialogue values and

evolutionary energy, even confronting with each other and redefining the concept of the traditional kitchen.

Through a *thought storm*, rain of ideas and thoughts (evolution of a classic brain storming) the project was discussed with the participants. A series of focus groups investigated the possibilities of artistic- cultural activities and strategies to spread, develop and finance the net of pastries. The initial structure presented by Pistoletto and Love Difference was developed by the group in outlining lines of heterogenic development. The participant's expectations and dreams together with their capacities and knowledge of their context of origin contributed to outline these new scenarios where the diverse planning capacities are valorized parallel without excluding one another. The encounter concluded with the commitment to contribute in the future to the project. The development of Love Difference Pastry in different cities parting from the ones at the Mediterranean and not following an unique model, nor economical, but valorizing the growth of its principal value: art and culture for relation and dialogue.

by Filippo Fabbrica, Project Manager of Love Difference