

GASTRONOMICA

THE JOURNAL OF FOOD AND CULTURE



SPRING 2012 \$12.98 USA/CANADA

Zoe Crosher's *Transgressions*



ARTIST ZOE CROSHER is fascinated by Los Angeles and its fictional and factual histories. Her photographic series *Transgressions* deals with the city's westernmost boundary, the water. "What happens at the edge, when you get to the Promised Land, at the ocean?" Crosher wonders. "I am interested in the people who go beyond there, who have transgressed that ocean. I'm not interested in talking about death or suicide. It is about the dissonance." To that end, Crosher photographed what might be called portraits whose subjects have gone missing; the prints are indices of disappearance that can be read as re-enacted facts or re-imagined fantasies. She chose seven mythic instances in which a figure—real, literary, or cinematic—went missing in the waves along the Southern California coastline, and then sought to capture the exact spot and time of day at which each one vanished.

When Crosher showed the work to Caitlin Freeman, an old friend from art school who cofounded Miette Bakery and now oversees Blue Bottle Coffee's pastry program, Freeman was inspired by the idea of consumption. She collected some water from the place where each of Crosher's shots was taken, formed salt crystals from it, and then used those in desserts, one for each portrait. The salt mined from the waves where Beach Boy Dennis Wilson exuberantly jumped in was incorporated into a dish that represented that moment.

"Mapping sites is where Caitlin came in," explains Crosher. "She gets at site specificity—at how you activate a space, or an idea through that space." Freeman turns the disappearing act into a morsel—something that's not only tangible but also ingestible, a more definitive end than any of the images provides. It is another kind of transgression, or, perhaps, a communion. *Charlotte Druckman* ◉



Transgressing the Pacific Where Natalie Wood Disappeared Off Catalina Island

ZOE CROSHER, FROM THE SERIES LA-LIKE, 2005. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY, HOLLYWOOD.

Concepts: shimmery, dark, luxurious and rich, shock of red (lipstick, her red down coat she was drowned in), harvest catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* subsp. *lyonii*) on the island.
Dessert: Chocolate caramel with sweetened, dried catalina cherries. Topped with lustre dust and sea salt.

Chocolate caramel with cherries

- 1 ¾ cup cream
 - 1 ⅔ cup sugar
 - ¾ cup corn syrup
 - ½ cup dried/sweetened cherries
 - ½ teaspoon sea salt
 - 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
 - 1 cup dark chocolate
1. Line an 8" square pan with foil and coat with butter.
 2. Bring heavy cream to a boil in a saucepan and set aside.
 3. In a large, heavy pot, stir sugar, corn syrup, salt, and cherries over medium heat. Bring to a boil and, stirring often, cook until sugar colors deep, dark brown.

4. Very carefully, standing back and watching for splatters, add butter one piece at a time, then the warm cream and finally the chocolate.
5. Cook the caramel, stirring constantly until it reaches 243 degrees.
6. Pull from heat and pour immediately into foil-lined pan.
7. Let stand, undisturbed, until firm enough to cut. At least 5 hours, preferably overnight.
8. Cut into 1" x 1" squares, sprinkle with sea salt. Either serve immediately or wrap individual pieces in wax paper or cellophane.



Transgressing the Pacific
Where Aimee Semple McPherson
Disappeared at Ocean Beach

ZOE CROSHER, FROM THE SERIES LA-LIKE, 2008. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY, HOLLYWOOD.

Concepts: white, cotton candy, fluff, harvested oranges and fennel from Echo Park, near Foursquare Church.

Dessert: Salted fennel and orange cotton candy.

Salted fennel and orange cotton candy

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 oranges
- 1 tablespoon fennel seed
- 2 teaspoons sea salt

1. Using a vegetable peeler, remove zest of orange in strips.
2. Lightly crush fennel seed and wrap in cheesecloth.
3. Combine sugar and salt in a food processor and process until finely ground.
4. Add orange peel to salt and sugar and, using your fingers, crush the orange, releasing oils.

5. Put the sachet of fennel in the bottom of a container with a tight fitting lid. Top with orange and sugar mixture.
6. Fit container with lid and let sit for at least a week.
7. Remove orange and fennel sachet and process sugar and discard.
8. Use in cotton candy machine, following manufacturer's instructions.



Transgressing the Pacific
Where Norman Maine Disappeared,
at Laguna Beach

ZOE CROSER, FROM THE SERIES LA-LIKE, 2008. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY, HOLLYWOOD.

Concepts: orange, black, calm, beautiful and perfect exterior, simmering fiery interior.

Dessert: Whiskey burnt orange chocolate truffle topped with sea salt.

Caramelized whiskey oranges

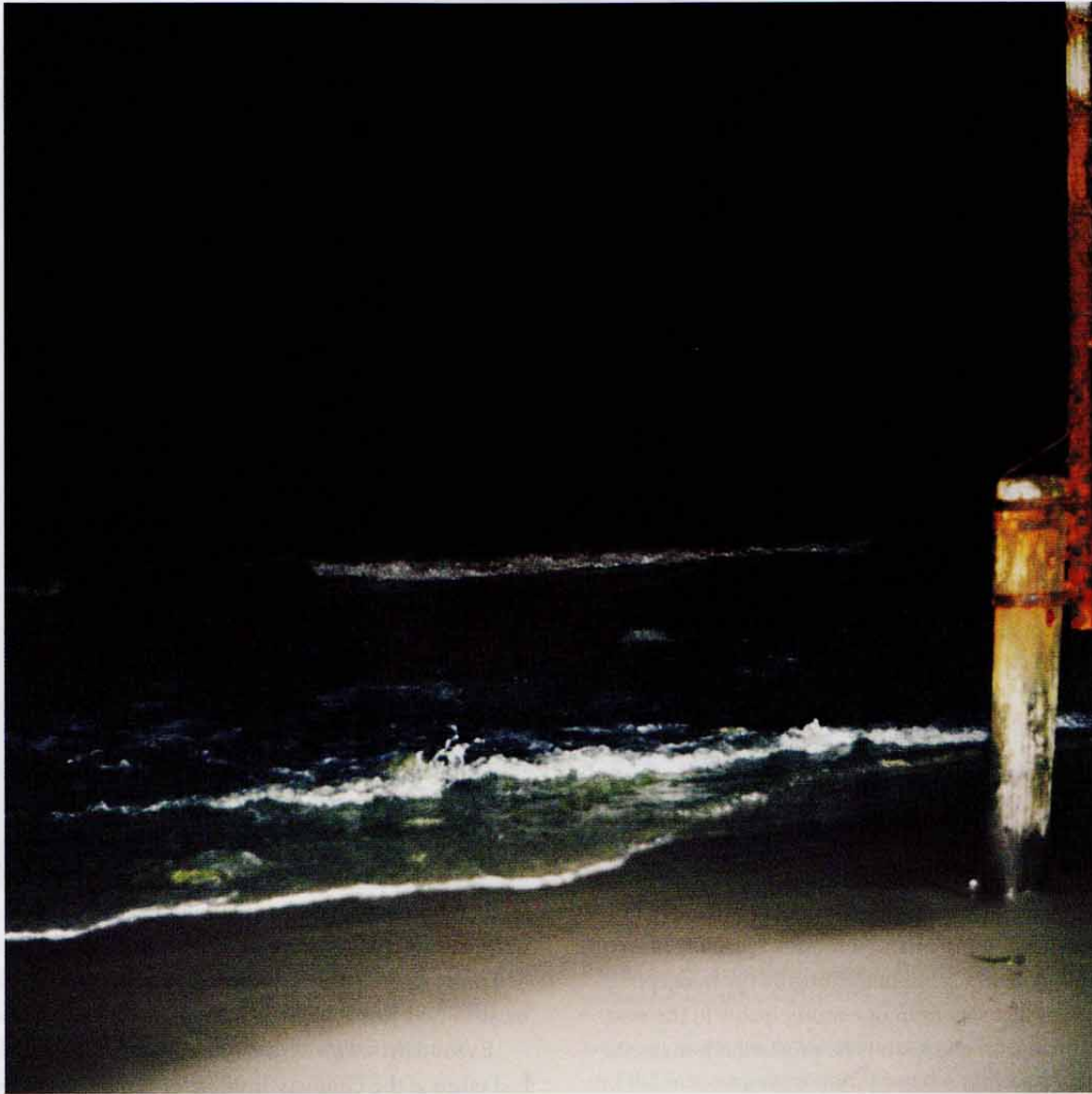
- 4 mandarins
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup whiskey

1. In a deep dutch oven, top orange slices with butter and then sprinkle with brown sugar. Top with foil or a heavy lid and cook at 325 degrees for 60 minutes, until they begin to soften.
2. Remove foil or lid, increase temperature to 350 degrees and cook for 45 minutes, until they begin to brown and the syrup thickens.
3. When oranges are soft and caramelized, remove pot to burner, pour warmed whiskey over orange segments and set alight.
4. Cool. Then process in a food processor until well chopped.

Chocolate truffle

- 4 ½ cups dark chocolate, chopped
- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 2 cups cream
- 5 egg yolks
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup cocoa powder
- Sea salt, to taste
- Warm cream

1. Pour over chocolate and powdered sugar.
2. Temper yolks and add to melted chocolate. Add butter, mix with immersion blender.
3. Fold in orange mixture and refrigerate overnight.
4. Roll into balls, 1" in diameter, roll in cocoa powder and top with a sprinkle of sea salt.



Transgressing the Pacific
Where Roger Wade Disappeared
at Malibu Colony

ZOE CROSHER, FROM THE SERIES LA-LIKE, 2005. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERRY RUBENSTEIN GALLERY, HOLLYWOOD.

Concepts: gin/martini, '60s nostalgic dessert, lady in ocean in billowy dress = floating meringues, salted licorice.
Dessert: Sambuca and mint salted meringue.

Sambuca and mint salted meringue

- 1/3 cup water
 - 4 sprigs fresh spearmint
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 2 teaspoons sea salt
 - 5 egg whites
 - 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
 - 1 tablespoon Sambuca
1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees.
 2. Bring water and mint to a boil. Turn off heat, cover with lid, and let steep for 15 minutes.
 3. Add sugar and sea salt to water and cook to 240 degrees.
 4. While sugar is cooking, in a mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip egg whites until foamy.

5. Add cream of tartar to eggs and continue whipping until soft peaks form.
6. Strain sugar syrup into a 2 cup heatproof glass measuring cup.
7. With the mixer on medium/high, being careful not to pour onto the whisk, slowly pour sugar syrup into egg whites.
8. Add Sambuca.
9. Whip eggs until stiff and glossy.
10. Spoon baseball-sized dollops of meringue onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.
11. Bake for 2 hours, until crisp. Turn off oven and continue baking until oven is cool.