



Fashioning Appetite: Restaurants and the Making of Modern Identity (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)

Joanne Finkelstein

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Public spaces have become platforms for the invention and display of self-identity, especially in the affluent West where the restaurant, from local café to Michelin-starred establishment, deftly stages these performances. In this follow-up to her classic *Dining Out: A Sociology of Modern Manners*, Joanne Finkelstein takes a fragment of social life—restaurant dining—and uses it to examine the dramatic effect our public behavior and social habits have on our private desires and sense of identity.

In *Fashioning Appetite*, the restaurant becomes a liminal space in which public and private boundaries are constantly renegotiated, where our personal celebrations and seductions are conducted within full view of the next table, and where eating alone has become a perilous social minefield. When food is fetishized and identity becomes a capitalist commodity, the experience of the restaurant transforms appetite into both a pleasure and a torment in which being satisfied with one's meal is linked to being satisfied with oneself. Applying new research in emotional capitalism to popular culture's pervasive images of conspicuous consumption, Finkelstein builds a cultural portrait in which every forkful is weighted with meaning.

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