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Discovering Food Product Design

By Shaping Sheep's Cheese Perception in New Zealand

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Design at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

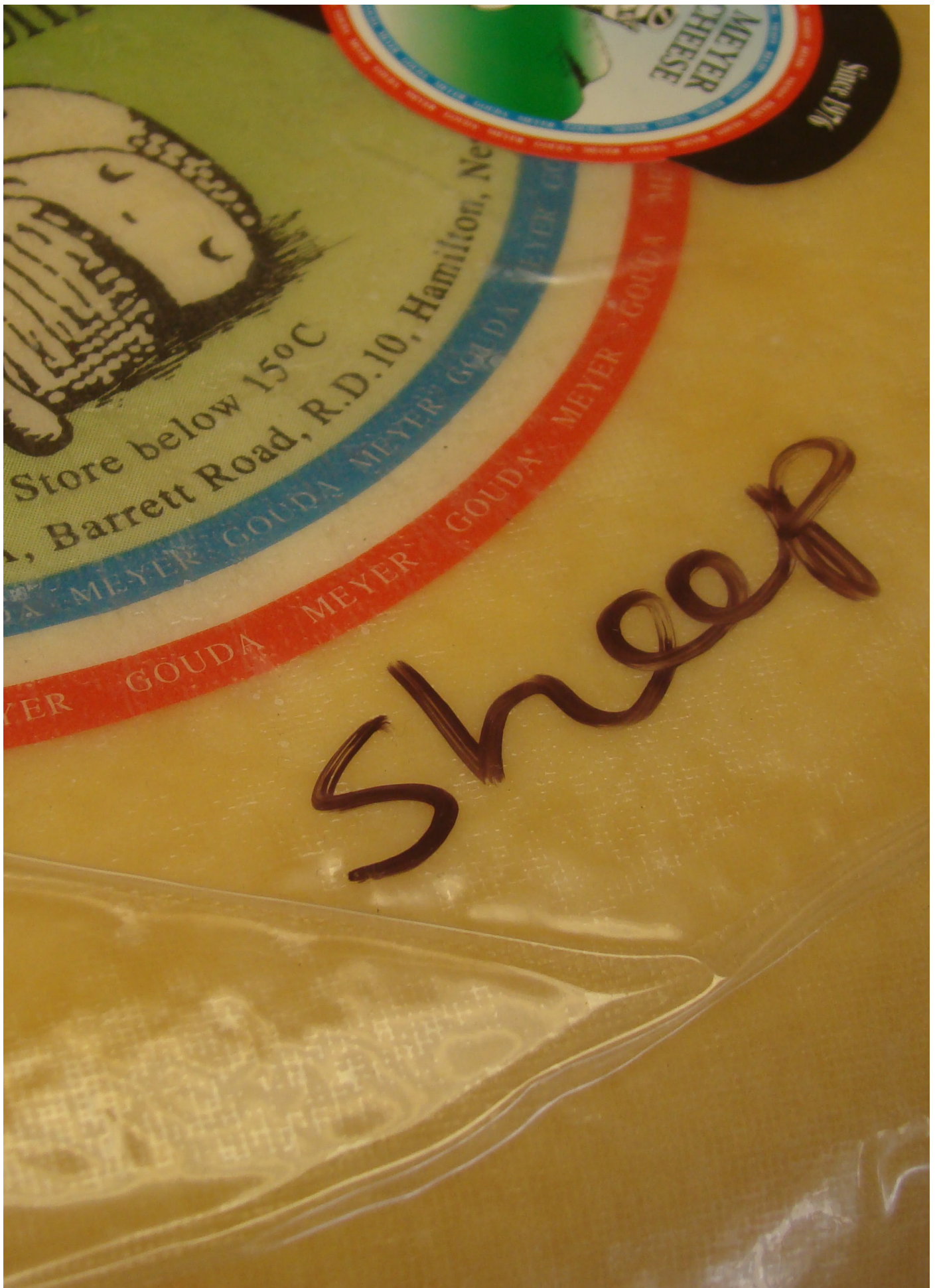


Figure 1. Meyer sheep cheese produced in Hamilton, New Zealand. Original, 2017.

KEYWORDS

Food
Product
Design
Cheese
Sheep
Experience
Perception
Emotion
Industry
Stereotype

GLOSSARY

Formulation: This is a combination of raw materials in specific proportion. To make a formulation the product qualities must be defined previously, data about raw materials must be collected (qualities and cost), quantitative techniques are used to control the tests (linear programming, experimental design and mixture designs) as well as product profile tests and technical tests related to the product qualities (Earle & Earle, 2009).

Prototype: A prototype from the food science perspective is a preliminary version of the product; after several iterations the product is perfected into a final product. From the perspective of design, a prototype is “anything that takes an idea out of your head and makes it visible for others” (McElroy, 2016, p.1). For this project, prototype is understood as the materialization of an idea which is made with the real materials that would be used in the final product.

Model: For this project, a model is understood as a “mock up”. It is the materialization of an idea which is made out of materials which are not the real ones. The goal is just to create a quick representation of the ideas.

Process: A series of ordered steps.

Optimization: The act of achieving standardized quality with efficiency (least time possible) for a particular task.

Experience: A meaningful moment in someone’s life.

ABSTRACT

The Food Industry is more interested than ever in creating value through differentiation and innovation, but often overlooks creativity as key factor in generating returns from food product experiences.

This project is an exploration into how design; as a creative discipline, and food science, as a technical discipline, can more closely align and collaborate to create valuable food product experiences. To explore this nexus, I exposed myself, a food scientist, to the creative research practices of design in order to develop a new cheese product.

The project is a contribution to the development of New Zealand's fledgling sheep dairy industry. I first examined New Zealanders' traditional perceptions and hidden desires in relation to sheep milk products. I then explored the different dimensions of the food object (Bassi, 2015) by developing a range of sheep's cheese products to help New Zealanders become more adventurous sheep milk product consumers.

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PERSONAL NOTE

As food product developer, I would like to create food product experiences. The reason is simple: food is a powerful material; it has not only physiological functionality, it has emotional and cultural power (Catterall, 1999).

Humans look for more than nutrients in their foods. There are several motivations for people to eat. A study carried out in Germany in 2012 have found a total of 331 motives for eating behaviour, where the five most common were (1)-liking, (2)-habits, (3)-hunger, (4)-health and (5)-convenience (Renner *et al*,2012). It is interesting that liking, and not hunger, is the first reason for eating, an aspect related to emotion. I believe food is more than nutrients, and we must design it considering human needs, desires and emotions.

I am a Costarican food scientist with a strong interest in food product development. My research involves finding answers to the following questions: How can I create food products to fulfill human requirements? How can I create food products people love? How can I create food that stimulates emotional reactions? How can I create food product experiences? How can I add value to food products through creativity? How can I bring together design and food science to create meaningful food products?

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