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In the Kitchen: Husband-and-Wife Artists Alois Kronschlaeger and Florencia Minniti on How to Throw an All-Blue Taco Party

An all-blue meal inspired by an all-blue art installation inspired by an all-blue jazz album.

Sarah Cascone (<https://news.artnet.com/about/sarah-cascone-25>), June 28, 2021



Alois Kronschlaeger and Florencia Minniti with his *Kind of Blue* installation, wearing the matching garments she made from scraps from the project. Photo by Bob Krasner.

During [Alois Kronschlaeger](http://www.artnet.com/artists/alois-kronschlaeger/)'s last New York solo show, in 2017, the artist moved his studio workbench to Cristin Tierney's gallery, where it sat 26 guests for a dinner he cooked with his wife, Florencia Minniti. The event was a recreation of one of the couple's "Bare Table" dinner party performances that they had been holding for years with friends.

Today, the pandemic has made hosting such affairs more difficult, but that didn't stop the pair from devising a menu inspired by *Kind of Blue*, [Kronschlaeger](https://www.aloiskronschlaeger.com/)'s immersive, site-specific installation in the empty storefront beneath Tierney's gallery, named after the Miles Davis record.

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“The last dinner with Cristin, everything was based on the color black. And this recipe everything is based on blue. It’s blue fish with blue corn tortillas,” Kronschlaeger told Artnet News.

“And then we have blue potatoes from Peru, blue-purple cabbage—everything is kind of blue,” Minniti added.



Alois Kronschlaeger and Florencia Minniti’s Kind of Blue Tacos. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Kronschlaeger blanketed the gallery with 575 yards of synthetic suede fabric. Viewed from the entrance, the sculpture looks like a cascade of blue waves tumbling down from the ceiling. But stepping closer, visitors will find that one can slip beneath the fabric, entering the cave-like space created by the grid and canopy formed overhead.

Minniti used some of the excess fabric to make them both matching blue outfits—a dress and a jumpsuit.

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“The reason for blue is [that we’re] coming out of the last horrible presidency and the pandemic feeling-the-blues blue, feeling kind of blue,” Kronschlaeger said. “But it’s a happy blue; it’s a blue where you can relax and reflect upon yourself. It becomes an environment of tranquility where viewers can immerse themselves and contemplate the color blue.”



Alois Kronschlaeger, *Kind of Blue* installation in the vacant storefront below the Cristin Tierney Gallery. Photo by John Muggenborg, courtesy of Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

“I grew up in the Austrian countryside on my parent’s farm. Food was always very performative, from planting the food to harvesting it and bringing it in, to having livestock,” Kronschlaeger said. “After the pig was slaughtered, I was the little boy who had to stir the blood for the blood sausage.”



Alois Kronschlaeger’s blue corn masa tortillas. Photo courtesy of the artists.

“Florescia and I both come from large families,” he said. “Food was always a place to gather.”

Today, the couple thinks of the meals they host as performative happenings.

“Our speciality is a taco party,” Minniti said. “Alois makes the masa—the sculptor makes the dough.”

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Alois Kronschlaeger and Florencia Minniti's Kind of Blue Tacos (serves six)

Blue Fish

2 lbs bluefish (or mackerel or striped bass)
4 dried guajillo chiles
4 dried morita chiles
4 dried ancho chiles
4 dried chipotle chiles
½ cup cumin seeds
¼ cup dried oregano
¼ cup smoked paprika
3 tbsp sea salt

Preheat comal—a pan used in Mexican cuisine to cook items such as tortillas—or a pan.

Spread chiles on the comal and toast until fragrant, about four minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl.

Spread cumin seeds on the comal and toast until smoking and very fragrant, about six minutes. Stir in oregano and toast for two minutes more. Add to the bowl with the chiles, then add smoked paprika and salt; stir to combine. Let cool slightly. Transfer to a food processor and process until the mixture is finely ground.

Run the fish through cold water and gently dry it with a paper towel.

Measure out two tablespoons of the rub. Using your hands, rub it evenly onto the bluefish before grilling.

Preheat the grill until the charcoal turns into bright “red” embers (no fire flames are visible).

Place the fish skin down first for six to seven minutes, then turn over and repeat grilling time.

Quick Pickled Slaw

4 large blue radishes
small purple cabbage
2 blue carrots
½ red onion
½ lime, juiced
drizzle of extra virgin olive oil
drizzle of apple cider vinegar
pinch of sea salt
1 tsp agave nectar
chopped fresh cilantro

Using a mandolin (if you have one) chop the radish, cabbage, carrots, and onion into very thin slices.

Combine ingredients in a bowl and mix using your hands. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Add fresh cilantro leaves as a garnish.

Guacamole

2 medium ripe avocados (when you shop for avocados, place them in one hand. They should feel firm to the touch but not hard)
1 large tomato
½ white onion finely chopped
3 teaspoons fresh oregano
½ tsp toasted and ground coriander seeds
½ tsp toasted and ground cumin seeds
3 tbsp lime juice
1 large serrano pepper
cilantro leaves
salt and pepper to taste

Cut the tomato in four parts, remove seeds and pulp and reserve for tomato sauce. Dice the vegetables. We like it extra spicy, but if you don't, remove the seeds from the pepper.

To combine the ingredients, use a *molcajete* (a stone mortar and pestle) if you have one. Crushing an onion-jalapeno-cilantro mixture in a molcajete releases additional flavors that meld effortlessly with the avocado. You're left with a batch of guacamole that's more cohesive than traditional guacamole recipes.

Use the pestle to crush the serrano peppers, onion, coriander, cumin, oregano and fresh cilantro leaves into a paste-like substance.

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Add lime juice in sections and the flesh of the avocados. Use the pestle to blend it all in. Do not over-do it with the pestle. We want to combine the ingredients, but not “smash” our guacamole. Remember to keep it “chunky.”

Salsa Verde

1 jalapeño
3 garlic cloves
8 ripe green tomatillos
½ white onion
lime juice
cilantro
½ cup water

Toast the whole jalapeño, garlic (with skin), onion (with skin), tomatillos (whole) in a comal until the skin is burnt. Remove from fire and allow to cool.

Remove the skins and place the jalapeño, garlic, onion and tomatillos in a blender.

Add water, lime juice, fresh cilantro, olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Blend until all ingredients are mixed and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving.

Caper Aioli

1 large egg from the farmers market egg
extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped capers
1 tablespoon fresh squeezed orange juice
1 teaspoon orange peel (important to only use the peel and not the white part of the orange)
salt and pepper to taste

Blend the egg and olive oil together into a mayonnaise.

Add capers, orange juice, orange peel and salt and pepper to taste. Combine.

Blue Corn Tortillas

2 cups blue corn flour
2 cups water
pinch of salt

Combine flour and salt to taste in a bowl and slowly add water, mixing it in.

Knead the mixture for approximately 15 minutes. Cover with a dry cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Make small balls of the blue corn masa with your hands and flatten using a tortilla press.

Make three to four tortillas per guest and place them on a clean surface.

Pre-heat a comal on the stove. Grill tortillas until air pockets start to appear (three to four minutes) and turn to the other side and repeat step.

Serve everything with fresh limes wedges and cilantro leaves.

“Alois Kronschaeger: Kind of Blue (<https://www.cristintierney.com/exhibitions/75-alois-kronschaeger-kind-of-blue>)” is on view in the storefront below Cristin Tierney Gallery, 219 Bowery, New York, May 21–June 30, 2021.