



# LUX

RESPONSIBLE CULTURE

it's a small World



Salt Sledding



Watermelon Seed Quest



Unpleasant Conversations



Scallion Lumberjack



Squeeze Cheese Crew



Sugar Cube Stackers



**Sugar Puzzle Family**



**Take Me Places**



**Apricot Pitter**

Christopher Boffoli is the photographer and inspiration behind the astonishing 'Big Appetites' series of photographs, of which we publish a selection here. Largely self taught, the Seattle-based photographer decided to take up a creative career after witnessing the events of 9/11 first hand and then sustaining a serious injury at high altitude while mountaineering on Mount Rainier in the Pacific Northwest.

The witty, original and thought-provoking Big Appetites was a finalist for a 2012 James Beard Foundation award and is the subject of a forthcoming book from Workman Publishing, to be released in Autumn 2013. His fine art photography has been showcased in exhibitions across the US and in London, Monaco and Singapore. His work has been published in more than 95 countries and can be found in galleries and private collections in the US, Canada, Europe and Asia.

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### **What inspired Big Appetites?**

The original genesis of this series was a childhood fascination with miniature things. As a young boy I was an avid model builder and a collector of Matchbox cars. Growing up in the late 70's and early 80's there was also a lot of television and cinema that exploited the concept of scale juxtaposition. The list of shows and movies with tiny people in an over-sized world is long. It was a very common theme. Actually, it recurs surprisingly frequently in our culture, from the Science Fiction films of the 1950's to the present day, most



likely because it was a cheap, easy special effect to pull off and also one that offered much dramatic and comedic potential. In fact, the idea even suited Jonathan Swift in the 18th century's *Gulliver's Travels*. And if you consider that many museums around the world are filled with miniature idols and other tiny representations of the real world, human beings have had a fascination with minuscule things for tens of thousands of years.

### **What informs your food photography?**

Food was a conscious choice as one of the elements of my work from the start. I thought that it offered a broad palette of beautiful colour and texture, especially when photographed with natural light. Of course I also realized that food would make the work broadly accessible cross-culturally, as whether you eat with a fork, chopsticks or your fingers everyone has a familiarity with food. The surprise was that food really isn't that beautiful. We tend to see most food from a certain distance at the supermarket or at a restaurant. I discovered that photographing it up close with macro lenses revealed all of its imperfections. Likewise, as a North American I thought there was something to say about the dysfunctional parts of our collective relationship with food that exist amidst the tremendous bounty that is available to us as consumers. Humour and surprise are definitely the top notes in my work. But I hoped this work would open a conversation about portion sizes, over-consumption, industrialized food production and the degree to which we have become food spectators in America, consuming gorgeously photographed food through the media (with our eyes) but over-relying on prepared and processed foods at meal time.

### **How did you first become interested in it and why?**

I saw an exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in late 2002 (a Chapman Brothers diorama) which used miniature figures in an artwork. Around the same time I saw the brilliant work of Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz (*Travellers*) with scale figures presented in snow globe dioramas, often in somewhat disturbing scenes. I loved the idea of luring in the viewer with something whimsical and then surprising them with something they perhaps weren't expecting. Those two works are what motivated me to begin conceiving what would eventually become my *Big Appetites* series of photographs. I worked away at the idea for



the better part of a decade without anyone at all paying very much attention to what I was doing, save for my young niece who loved the images. But then some of the work in the series was spotted by an editor in Europe in 2011 who syndicated the images in the British press. Judging from the reaction, combining two of the most common elements in just about every culture in the world (toys and food) was more powerful than I ever realized it would be. And I've found it compelling to explore both the human fascination with detailed miniatures and with food.

### **What are your forthcoming projects?**

I'm continuing to work on the Big Appetites series. In fact, I have just completed a few months of shooting many new images for an upcoming book to be released worldwide by Workman Publishing (NY) later this year. I'm continuing to show large-format, fine art photographic prints from this series which in the last year have had exhibitions in Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Monaco and Singapore. In the UK the limited edition prints are represented by the Flaere Gallery ([flaere.com](http://flaere.com)). I'm also keeping busy with a range of editorial and commercial commissions.

*Christopher Boffoli's work is available at [bigappetites.net](http://bigappetites.net)*