

Editorial:

On Leftovers,

Susanne Foellmer & Richard Gough

On the mention of leftovers most people think first of food and of the possibilities for the next day's dinner. Most cultures of the world have 'classic' dishes, made from leftovers, that help define their distinctive cuisine and often contribute solid notes of robust and rustic fare; simple, frugal, wholesome stuff. These recycled dishes are the invention of applied domestic science and good kitchen management, the avoidance waste, a celebration of resourcefulness and inventiveness, the creation of grandmothers and far beyond, of know-how passed down through generations, not only the result of austerity, abstemiousness or former hard times but also of good sense, thrift, and the application of cooking techniques to transform waste into nourishment. Sometimes the dish made from leftovers is often thought to be better, tastier, more flavoursome and satisfying than the 'original' meal this parasitic supplement matured from. And in consumption there is also the satisfaction of prudent and economic measures, a two for the price of one accomplishment, a domestic act of magical transubstantiation.

But if the leftovers are simply left over then they are reduced to (rendered) waste, and food, 'a substance with strong presence' (Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett), is especially charged with responsibility and consideration in the face of imprudent waste, nonchalant opulence, uncaring abundance. 'Think of the starving children of x'; each generation has the name of that country and the images of its children (stomachs distended, suffering from malnutrition), emblazoned in their minds/memory – for us (the editors of this issue) it is Biafra and Ethiopia. Issues of waste, sustainability, recycling and upscaling run through this issue. From the perspective of food, the leftover is precariously poised, it could be left, in time and place discarded and abandoned; left to waste. Or it could be carefully enshrouded, chilled, placed in the dark, uncertain of its future and yet certain of a future, a second life, repurposed and refried and of course, it could simply be re-served with minimal next day accompaniment. This power of the food remainder and its provocative predicament (waste or nourishment) has pertinence to all the performance engagements with leftovers that this collection of essays chronicles and purveys.

Thinking about leftovers in the arts, and especially as artistic practice, Damien Hirst's A Thousand Years (1990) is a challenging starting point. In this piece, he placed the head of a dead cow into a sealed vitrine, gradually the skull/carcass slowly deteriorated assisted by many flies (leftovers decay and eventually disappear but new life, mould, maggots, flies emerge). In the performing arts, the recent preoccupation for several artists with the issue of how to preserve their (once 'live') art; how to re-present it and render it accessible for future generations, is an increasing subject of experiments and discussion. One example might be Marina Abramović's performance retrospective The Artist is Present in New York's MoMa (2010), showing about 50 of her former "works" as durational re-performances within the opening hours of the museum. In re-enacting and reconstructing its acts, events and happenings of former, foundational years, performance art takes the apparently troublesome historiography of a supposedly singular art form in its own hands – and at the same time creates an impact on the status of documents or so-called "original" art works.

Both examples already show the ambivalence inherent in the idea of leftovers: As a sample (or a re-performance) of a bygone event, or of an animal that has once been alive, they point to that which has gone, what is past, and what will never come back again – at least not in the 'form' in which it existed before. However, leftovers also imply possible futures: Of flesh (naturally) being used to nourish flies and nurturing future generations, of performers re-doing and re-shaping former solo performance art events, previously thought to be bound to one artistic individual (the originator, the author/performer). Thus, leftovers, or remainders as we would call them in this case, always already comprise a double temporal configuration: of things past and to come, of events gone by and yet to be born. Also, they escape the idea of uselessness because of being waste: in the moment we see – or rather find – a leftover, in the minute we address it, it becomes revalorized, escapes the sphere of the unmarked, and re-enters the realm of meaning, of interpretation – it jumps directly back into the hermeneutic circle, of course re-shaped by its new, revitalised, or rather, transformed appearance.

Taking these thoughts into account, one could further say that leftovers are intrinsically connected to political questions, or even more: that they are political by nature. If we rethink the two examples as well as the initial reflections on food waste, for instance moral aspects come into play: The question is triggered, should it be allowed to represent the cadaver of an animal as art? Or if we could conceive of a former living being, a non-human animal, as debris at all? In the case of Abramović, cultural representations in terms of the politics of appropriation come to the fore: Who is “allowed” to replay her performance art? Does one always have to obtain the author’s consent? And how does one relate to performers working as living exhibits of re-presented art over a span of seven hours each day?

Hence, it comes with no surprise that most of the submissions to this issue are putting the politicality of leftovers into the centre of their reflections in some way or other. The explorations range from questions of sustainability, for instance in the reuse of materials for props or stage design, or ecological issues. They also tackle the issues of recycling and upcycling as a cultural urban necessity, questions of social and artistic labour and their gendered-ness, and the empowerment of so-called intangible cultural expressions and its restoration and maintenance.

The first article in this collection begins with Barbara Formis’ The Critical Power of the Residual which functions as a keynote to the many fascinating engagements with leftovers that follow. In this opening article Formis regards the residual as both material leftovers and political minorities and argues (implores) for an empowerment of what is left out and left behind. Formis also reflects on the relationship between the activities of performance art and maintenance and applies a feminist analysis to that relationship. We began this editorial considering food and the use of leftovers as good ‘household management’ to avoid waste and likewise Formis focusses on food as leftover in her essay. She does this first through a close viewing of Daniel Spoerri’s trap or snare paintings which froze (trapped) the detritus and debris left on the table as the diners departed and converted them into three dimensional sculptures of the leftover. Formis goes into considerable depth in analysis of Spoerri’s practice and the focus on preservation rather than production becomes a theme extending to the performance of maintenance. She also embraces the work of dance artist Anna Halprin (The Lunch and Lunch Ritual), her gendered scores and

strategies to include or leave out audiences and the actions required to maintain and service the performances. Finally, Formis turns to New York based Mierle Laderman Ukeles and her process-based art that situates and disturbs domestic and civic acts of maintenance. The article apprehends artists and art practices from the 60s and 70s with uncanny prescience and relevance to today.

The emphasis on work (maintenance), forms the yearlong focus of Laderman Ukeles' art. The transformation of work into the subject of art is also relevant in the following article: In Broke Blokes: Performance Scraps Mark Greenwood places a durational performance by himself in the centre of his reflections on work in age of post-industrialism. Combining his own work experience in the gambling industry, that is, the betting business, he uses its leftovers, such as betting slips, in order to reflect on the problems of the transition of the job landscape in Britain, especially in North-East England. Formerly thought of as a leisure industry, closely embedded in between labour and recreation, betting shops now seem to be all that is left over of a former thriving industrial landscape. Concentrating on these remainders, Greenwood thus investigates the changes from material labour into its rather abstract articulations.

Following the changes in the world of labour, the next article explores the blurring of boundaries of the private and the public. Investigating a performance by a Belgian artist, in which she collected all of her life traces during one year, Annelies van Assche explores the interrelatedness of life, work and art. In Recycling, Reinvesting and Revaluing: On Immateriality in Sarah Vanhee's Oblivion van Assche delineates the literal work it takes to keep and cope with the debris used by oneself in a certain period of time. Those leftovers, however, are not regarded as negligible excess of artistic production, but as essential elements of artistic creation that invisibly shape the aesthetic 'outcome' of a work and that, in the analysed performance, show the merging of process and product. Not least, the gathered traces, such as production emails, reveal the intrinsic connection of so-called artistic and so-called non-artistic, managerial work, that forms the reality of contemporary freelance art.

The accumulation of leftovers also illustrates the necessity of dealing with what is just available, given the usual scarcity of resources in independent contemporary art.

Not only since the financial crisis the creative industries, like many others, are experiencing harsh cuts and restrictions. Ricard Gázquez focuses on the unequal distribution and accessibility of economic resources in the theatre sector. In What to do with the leftovers of the arts industry? Recycling artists and theatrical policies in twenty-first century Barcelona, Spain he explores three productions of the independent theatre artists Marta Galán and Juan Navarro who for instance recycle props from high-budget theatre and film productions in their own work. Presented in a former factory-now-arts-centre venue, Gázquez's article relates the macro-level of opportunities – and at the same time politically induced necessities of cultural upcycling – to the micro-level of artistic production.

Though making a virtue of necessity, leftovers in contemporary performing arts often still expresses a certain sense of deficiency. However, in previous times dealing with leftovers was rather more a routine matter. From a historic perspective, Miriam Handley places her explorations in the England of the eighteenth century, positing it as a period in which debris plays a role both as residue and as a possible container of the creation of new meanings. Using food scraps as metaphorical figures Theatrical bubble and squeak: The stage direction as leftover in Eighteenth-century theatre investigates stage directions both as leftovers and initiators of plays to come. Moreover, Handley depicts the connection between those directions and the metaphor of food and its waste as a common figure in the culture of these days, that finds its ways into the theatrical discourse as well.

From a historical reflection on objects and things, Dorota Sosnowska launches into material culture in a thrilling mode, proposing adventures within archives and remains that although stepped in time and seemingly requiring certain reverence can be considered an invitation to dance (in the archive, with the remains, amongst the ruins). She sees the leftover as multi-temporal and embodying another form of subjectivity (at the juncture between past and future), she sees the leftover in need of a theory. Following this theoretical and framing discourse in Black Space and Trauma and Ruin Sosnowska focuses on two very different artists: the American installation artists Theaster Gates who creates socially engaged work raising contemporary community issues, and the Polish performer, sculptor and installation/exhibition maker Robert Kusmirowski whose work manipulates (mutates

and reframes) historical themes using leftovers and artefacts. The article analyses the function of leftovers and artefacts, harnessed by these different artistic practices but also reveals issues of memory, time, agency and archive: what the leftovers perform.

The artistic handling of leftovers as an expression of social accountability also reflects back on the internal infrastructures of art itself. Liam Francis focuses on the question of ownership of artistic material in processes of dance production, and the circle of giving and taking. In What is Whose and Who is What? he presents an innovative approach by getting hold of all materials dancers, like himself, offered during the creative process, and that have been discarded due to decisions of the choreographer in charge. Gathering and thus reclaiming these 'waste materials' in a 'recycling-performance' he created, Francis asks fundamental questions about collaboration, co-creation and frustration, and authorship in the realm of contemporary artistic labour.

In a similar approach, Sarah Levinsky concentrates on the reuse of her own work. In The Performance of Leftovers, she considers the recurrent practice of performance makers to revisit, recycle and repurpose previous created material and the transformative and (re)generative creative process that are engaged. Sarah writes from the perspective of a dance/performance maker and describes three dance works, developed over six years, that each fed on the leftovers and remains of the previous emanation. In this candid account of a sustained creative process, issues of disorder, disorientation, serendipity and fallibility are confronted, a haunting of previous manifestations, themes and objects shadows the creative process but clear organization begins to emerge through a rigorous dance dramaturgy and confrontations with the material presence (and associations) of pre-existing fragments – a 'dramaturgy of leftovers'. Thematically the issues of food waste, hunger, starvation, plastic waste, plastic pollution and detritus all resonate with current environmental and global/political concerns.

Leftovers thus also represent the idea of a certain incompleteness. While this seems to be more of an issue in the performing arts, some protagonists in the fine arts share these preoccupation, often in combination with questions of the styles of

artistic expression. In Lest We Vanish into Meaning Francisco Sousa Lobo portrays Philip Guston's aversion against modernism and abstraction. By using one of the painter's methods, that is designing comic strips, he reveals his affinity to trash and objects from everyday life, and detects some of Guston's paintings as uncertain leftovers: almost never finished and constantly reworked.

Susanne Foellmer who has sustained several years of research into leftovers in relation to dance and choreography, and more generally the recycling and revisiting of material remains of cultural practices (through documentation, archive, evidence and trace) turns her attention to the political and to the catastrophic. In On the Political Nature of Leftovers she confronts the true horror of human loss; of families and loved ones reduced to remains, homes destroyed by ravishing fire and the transformation of a community into a jagged concrete leftover haunting London and piercing the conscience of one of London's most affluent neighbourhoods. Foellmer confronts a calamity, the true horrors of which and the political ramifications (that impact on issues of community, immigration, poverty, social housing, denial, affluence and dislocation) are still unravelling at the time of writing. Foellmer reflects on the catastrophic and the uncomfortable reality of human and domestic leftovers that rise from the ashes of the Grenfell Tower fire of June 2017; she extends that reflection to consider community, loss, victim, emptiness, the environmental and the monumental.

As the burnt-out and charred tower of Grenfell remains on the London landscape as an agonizing monument to the human catastrophe that took place on one specific night we turn to the other side of the globe to encounter another monument of sacrifice and shame. In Meat Fence, Jonathan Marshall, describes the bizarre two-kilometer long fence upon which the hides of slaughtered wild pigs and deer are displayed as trophies of a hunt that has endured more than 16 years. The memorials of the hunt, displayed as a running fence, a rotting exhibition, are continuously replaced and accumulate, as one rots to oblivion, another, fresh with flesh, takes its place – these remains 'remain differently' (qua Rebecca Schneider). The essay oscillates between (literally) gory description and oblique reflection, embracing the roots of dramaturgy, The Bacchae, Brecht and more generally sacrificial landscapes.

From the morbid scar of rotting hides that cuts deep across the barren landscape in South Island, New Zealand, we move indoors to an austere installation and intimate last supper. In *Performing Leftovers: On the ecology of performance's remains*, Edward Whittall confronts Ortega Ayala's performance installation *The Last Supper*, which is first staged 'live' with 'partakers' of the Seder food, and then filmed and replayed through a loop across several days, foregrounded by the rotting remains of the 'original' supper which have remained in place. As the projected film is stable and constant (as if in aspic) the food 'leftovers' become ever more animated and alive through decay and fungal mutation. Whittall insightfully and appositely uses Ayala's creative strategy of (de)composition to consider performances of food. He raises issues of waste, temporality, remains and recycling, preservation, destruction and the fragile and complex issues that surround food, performance and ecology.

A scenographic approach to the recycling and upcycling of found and reclaimed materials is taken up in the next article by Tania Beer, [Saved from the Scrapheap](#). Beer enthuses and advances a positive and creative practice with regard to scavenging amongst the scrapheap, emphasizing the unforeseen and the marvellous (in the surrealist sense of the word) in the unwanted, the forlorn and the rejected objects, jettisoned from daily life. As foraging of natural foodstuff has become mana for foodies and inventive chefs, so repurposing and upscaling reclaimed materials can have great potential for scenographers – creating second lives for the abandoned objects, rejuvenated and recycled through multiple use. Beer makes a passionate case for sustainability within performance design and scenography, together with a plea for the respect for objects and materials (and their life cycles) emphasizing co-collaboration and correspondence as sensitive and responsible practice. Through example and with reference to critical theory she also points to the creative power of uncertainty, of not knowing and allowing the found material to not only be reclaimed but also to re-claim.

For Tania Beer the foraging and repurposing takes place in and from the urban scrapyards of contemporary Australia. For Ffion Jones the ethnographic project and encounters with remains are in the rural landscape of her family's farm in a remote part of mid-Wales (UK). The fieldwork was literally in the fields and in the farmhouse, outhouses, detritus and contraptions of her childhood, her father's, father's farm. She



made stop-animated films of ten site-specific, and quite mundane (functional), objects; remains that have endured, with the patina of time eroding, and some still functioning. Following a description of these specific sites/objects, Jones proceeds to reflect on the labour and human toil that still marks these objects, on the time and rhythm of decay and defiance (perdurance) and constructs a project of contemporary archaeology that problematizes its own sense of nostalgia, place, belonging and the very meaning of heritage.

Memory garnered and preserved through leftovers features an important part in the writing of his/stories – a topic that is of perpetual importance in the writings of Walter Benjamin. Though only mentioned at the margins, the ragpicker plays a significant role in Benjamin's Arcade Project, so Frederik Le Roy's argues. In Ragpickers and leftover performances. Walter Benjamin's philosophy of the historical leftover Le Roy highlights the performativity of Benjamin's concept of history. Comparing the figure of the ragpicker to that of the flaneur, he delineates two different forms of dealing with history: While the flaneur appears as a critical connoisseur of urban culture, observing and interpreting traces of the past, the ragpicker incorporates a materialistic model of memory by literally dealing with waste, thus acting as an archivist of the little narratives.

Angela Viora considers traces of another sort, a negation of presence. She asks what happens when the performer leaves the performance space, when presence transforms (negates or returns) to absence and when emptiness (in a spatial sense) generates room for the audience (and their imaginings). This displacement of the artist or performer, a deliberate departure or act of disappearance, she regards as immensely fertile, disturbing and eloquent; she proposes this shift in focus as a fecund de-centralizing strategy. She examines the work of Australian performance artist and print maker, Mike Parr and Cuban-American sculptor and video maker, Ana Mendieta, 'through the frame of what is left over when the body is literally absent' or hidden, disguised, vanished or disappeared. Following an analysis of two specific projects of these world-renowned artists, Viora then correlates her observation to her own performance practice that evokes the shrouded and hidden corpses of the yet unidentified, and thus unknown, and disappeared, immigrants washed up in recent years on the shores of Italy and Greece.

Again, these remains 'remain differently' and the imagination of the witness makes meanings from what is leftover.

Performing states of absence by withdrawing the body from the sphere of the visual also triggers questions of sustainability in the performing arts. Often being regarded as an ephemeral art form, Hetty Blades, Rosamaria Cisneros and Sarah Whatley are addressing dance's leftovers in the realm of intangible culture heritage. Following from their research project Europeana Space, dealing with the reuse, and commodification, of bygone art's events, The Values of Leftovers in Dance Research critically investigates those leftovers. The authors frame them as a phenomenon situated between the conservation of traces and the possibility of triggering new creation while also asking what happens to traces, such as ideas, that do not materialize themselves in the conventional form of documents.

With this last article we come back to one of the initial questions: The accountability required in dealing with leftovers, especially with regard to the preservation of an individual's own art form, its situation in artistic, economic and ecological environments, and its significance in tackling political issues. But then, let's not forget the joy of playing with leftovers, the abundance, the 'permitted' unruliness, the moments of undecidedness when nothing is yet shaped but everything seems possible – until the leftover sneaks into the intelligible world again and prompts us to reflect. We hope the collection of articles on leftovers assembled here will open vast vistas of possibilities for your own regard and reuse of leftovers.