on pickling

Scrub cucumbers.
Chop garlic.
Chop dill.
Boil water, kosher salt, white vinegar, spices.
Layer cucumbers, garlic, and dill.
Pour liquid into crock until full.
Place a plate on top.
Store in a cool dark place.
Check pickles in about 10 days.

Heat water in large pot.
Add: 1 tsp salt
Garlic pickling spice
3 tbsp white vinegar

Boiling water in large pot

The Clark-Li
Rosenberg-Peterson
cornichon of
Madison, Wisconsin,
is a superior
gherkin, notable
for its relentless
garlic. Its aroma
stains your nostrils
like a smart bomb
and then spirals
in your mouth, the
aftermath hovering
insistently over the
back of the tongue
like a welcome
memory. Its cold
center is a salty
alarm, while its
gradually yielding
texture works like
Marcel's 'petite
madeleine', taking
one back to the
Second Avenue Deli,
to Junior's, to
Katz's, etc. . .
Recounting through
the taste buds like
a klezmer riot,
such a cucumber
certainly might
have moved
Shakespeare to
say of it: 'This
was a pickle'.

Nigel Carroll,
Philosopher

Cooking by Artists I never liked the phrase 'performance by artists' as a way to describe
live art/ performance art. It sounds clubby and exclusive; it tries to genrefy a practice based
on a class of participants. But cooking by artists? One may be ambivalent about whether
artists should make performance, but surely art can only be improved if artists cook? Staging
cooking as art is another question altogether, so is treating cooking as if it were art. But for
learning the virtues of patience, attention to detail, reverence for both tradition and innovation,
and that the outcome of a process is not a product but an element of the next process (eating),
cooking is a practice which can be universally recommended to artists, and particularly
to performance artists. And if we pay attention to cooking by artists, maybe it's not as much
to watch extraordinary people do ordinary things, but to notice that even artists can cook.

Cooking sausages
and onions in
"Le Train Du Memoir",
a performance by
Li Chiao-Ping and
Douglas Rosenberg.

Design: nancy zucker
On opening a jar of pickles by Chiao-Ping, Doug, LB and Michael, the first thing that you notice is the powerful bouquet, a heady, intoxicating blend of garlic and dill. The color and texture are slightly deceptive; these marinated cucumbers look crisp and surprisingly bright green, like half-dones. But biting into one, you're penetrated by its full-bodied, lingering sappiness. It's crunchy, garlicky, piquant, succulent, and savory, with slight pungent overtones.

There's an old Russian idiom: "Molodets, kak solomyeyi opuklov (Right on, like a salted cucumber)."

After tasting one of these, you feel like cheering, "Molodets! Molodets!"

Sally Banes, Performance Critic

The preparation of food and the act of gathering and sitting down together to eat a meal are very important to most Chinese people, especially among immigrant families. While much emphasis and energy is placed on the successful and smooth accommodation of the immigrant son or daughter into the dominant (American) culture, a sense of crisis and anxiety exists in the family (especially between the older and younger generations) from the approaching loss and lack of preservation of cultural practices and rituals which have long been passed from generation to generation. Who will preserve our traditions? Who will honor our ancestors?

The immigrant family, the keeper of the culture, is like a very young tree, which is transplanted to a new soil, sun, and neighbors. The tree needs to adapt to its new home. It is responsible for its new environment to provide the same kind of resilience and support as the homeland. In comparison, in later years, the transplanted tree will look distinctly different from the homeland tree. In other words, the family tree is now uprooted or displaced from the original family's land and no longer can physically and contemporaneously interact with the traditionally cultural climate of home and therefore, will continue on a different cultural trajectory than birthplace friends. The immigrant family, then, carries a kind of innate unsymmetry of their cultures and through their rituals, such as cooking and eating, preserves some of their traditions.

My mother and father always fill their rituals with their own food when they come to visit. They insist that they never feel full if they don't have rice everyday and so, consequently, we rarely take them out to eat anything other than Chinese food and it is usually unsymmetrical in a sense of taste for the fact that they also like how their food (of rice). The notion of feeling full is an interesting one in that it really is not a measure of quantity or fullness at all; rather, it is quite definitely about an emotional and affective level which provides a feeling of security or stability. My parents participate in perpetuating cultural history and its rituals and it is important that it is not one that is perpetuated in any common way in that it is not the same that they have here (of rice). We feel like they have the same here.


what if a critic... Asking what a performance critic might make of our annual pickling activity is a version of the old rhetorical prompting device about the anthropologist from Mars. A visit to the world of food by a critic from the world of performances...
The act of "pickling" or "setting in" cucumbers or other foods is an act of preservation both metaphysically and otherwise. Pickling preserves the life of a particular food long after it may have spoiled or disintegrated. One might say that in a sense, pickling is a form of natural preservation that protects the corpus of the original, while preserving the performative ritual of pickling itself. In other words, the act of pickling is a preservation of tradition and a tradition of preservation. The performative act of pickling preserves a tradition as it produces an artifact. In the Eastern European tradition of pickling, pickling involves a ritual that is practiced and maintained in small groups annually, at the same time each year based on the availability of freshly harvested food products. As a "cultural" act, it is one that relies on the more physical aspects of Jewish life to preserve and maintain itself. As Jewish, the preservation of culture through the ritual of pickling (tishrei) is a symbolic link to the past. As Judaism is a "Jewishness," it is defined as a tradition. The traditions of Jewish cooking and food preservation in the home are non-existent as well. The pickles we make each year are a product of the memory of my mother as inscribed by my father's mother. As such, we have broken with the mantra and recontextualized a new community whose practices and memories are at the core of our cultural identity and history. In our pickling community, Jews have come to view their food as part of a larger network of cultural production and consumption, perpetuating the intertextual and temporal relationship between the two traditions. In this way, our pickles fulfill some of the social and cultural functions of the traditional recipe. We have chosen to adopt the practice of pickling and subsequently to share the product of our work among our larger community. The process of coming together each year has, for me, a time of personal reflection (even as we are surrounded by the group) as it goes through the repetitive, performative nature of the ritual necessary to produce the pickle. Additionally, the repetition of the ritual is a way for me to reflect on the process of pickling, which, in turn, is a way for me to reflect on the labor and the process of bringing the pickles to the table and enjoying the recipe. Yet, we cannot simply call our pickles "traditional" because they are the result of a process that has been perpetuated for generations. We have chosen to adopt the practice of pickling and subsequently to share the product of our work among our larger community. The process of coming together each year has, for me, a time of personal reflection (even as we are surrounded by the group) as it goes through the repetitive, performative nature of the ritual necessary to produce the pickle. Additionally, the repetition of the ritual is a way for me to reflect on the process of pickling, which, in turn, is a way for me to reflect on the labor and the process of bringing the pickles to the table and enjoying the recipe. Yet, we cannot simply call our pickles "traditional" because they are the result of a process that has been perpetuated for generations. We have chosen to adopt the practice of pickling and subsequently to share the product of our work among our larger community. The process of coming together each year has, for me, a time of personal reflection (even as we are surrounded by the group) as it goes through the repetitive, performative nature of the ritual necessary to produce the pickle. Additionally, the repetition of the ritual is a way for me to reflect on the process of pickling, which, in turn, is a way for me to reflect on the labor and the process of bringing the pickles to the table and enjoying the recipe. Yet, we cannot simply call our pickles "traditional" because they are the result of a process that has been perpetuated for generations.

What are the Components of a Beautiful Process? A making of the event as a species, in some way outside of daily life, and a casual attitude toward any given moment in the process. The premise is that the everyday is a special occasion, an event of the day. The premise is that the everyday is a special occasion, an event of the day. The premise is that the everyday is a special occasion, an event of the day.

Pickling Reflection
Making pickles may initially look like a common routine task to celebrate modernity's stringent platform of rationality and order, but like Dutch artist-cum-chef Jep Van Lissum's home, sausages, treysters, meatballs and black puddings, couldn't be incorporated into a staid menu. Those angering an academic analysis of loveliness, home-made pickles cannot be assessed solely on their sensory pleasures. Their rationality and value lies in their intended system of exchange.

On December 9, 1996, I was a proud and honored resident of one jar of salty Jewish-style New York pickles by Madam artists Laurie Beth Clark, Liz Chin-Ing, Michael Peterson and Denise Green. Following Clark's instructions to put them in the refrigerator when I got home, I have yet to break its tight seal. Making their way to the back of the top shelf with the unidentifiable foil-wrapped leftovers, I still get a good look at them every time I pull out the gallon of milk. Lately I have noticed an opaque white cloud forming around the bottom of the jar.

What I consume these pickles to fulfill some sort of artist project or condition manifest destiny? Can they add the ranks of fructose in the bottom of the trash bin or should they simply take up permanent residence next to my brother-in-law's home-made horses radish?

The art of giving away an elaborately processed pickled fruit, that in the end is not as palatable as table salt, speaks to the perversities and contradictions inherent in our contemporary state of social anorexia. If the Killian dining companion is executed with the heart-felt, time-honored traditions passed down by old-world ancestors, then its value as a gift in time and history. However, if leftover pickles are found in the refrigerator of another with a lot of mass produced Milwaukee man known, the intent of exchange is likely to become a source of protest against with Durban's bottled air or hidden sound. Therapy and catharsis are also an essential part of the product of the bringing low-cut staple. When justifying pickles aesthetic criterion, tastes, and contexts with reevaluating our desires for restoration and self-determination, the latter will always have a priority the appetite. Architect René Kupka, whom: "If there exists a method inartistic, it is the method of a systematic idealism and the transfiguration of the aesthetic, without theoretical justifications which, by regression, are ideological phenomena, and in so doing, it is reborn." Finally, the act of preserving pickles and mustard seeds a memory of order and respect for the everyday.}(Image cropped down nearly to its bottom)
New Critical Writing
Performance Research Annual Essay Competition

Submission deadline: 1st September 1999, for publication in Volume 5, Number 1, Spring 2000.

The aim of the competition is to foster original writing by emerging artists, scholars and critics and is open to anyone whose work has not been previously published in a peer reviewed journal. The work of all participants will be featured in the Performance Research and can be submitted for publication. While only one will be published we hope that the process of working with an experienced reader/writer as editor will be useful in itself. PR is also currently looking at alternate forms of publication for all revised submissions, in conjunction other organizations promoting new critical writing.

Forthcoming Issues

Emerging digital media, information and communications technologies are changing the ways in which we understand and experience time and space, place and body. These developments challenge us to redefine existing strategies and forms of performance, and to create fresh approaches and alternative environments for performance making and composition. On line will explore these changing conditions as they relate to performance practice and discourse. The editors invite manuscripts from individuals and groups involved in exploring territories where emerging technologies and performance overlap and intersect, as well as excursions of the histories of performance and technology.

On Silence
Winter 1999

The greatest irony about silence is that there has been so much said about it. In fact, in this noisiest of centuries, silence has emerged as one of the ricihest areas of critical enquiry and most powerful elements of artistic expression. For the first issue of this millennium, Performance Research will look at its nature, uses and meaning across the fields of performance. We wish to explore silence as metaphor, as practice, as absence, empathy and experience, political silence and silencing, musical and visual silence, and the place of silence in the history of the avant-garde, as well as linguistic and philosophical approaches to silence.

Open Issue: Vol 5 no.1 opens the fifth year of publication for Performance Research, and focuses on furthering the conversations with scholars and artists which have developed over the first half-decade of our existence. As well as including reflections on the state of play in the worlds of performance practice, theory and criticism the editors intend to open new subjects and to initiate new formats for publication. Proposals, interviews, performance texts, letters and responses to the ideas generated in PR since 1995 are welcomed and encouraged.

Open Issue
Spring 2000

Editorial

This issue of Performance Research arises from and responds to a conference/festival organised by the Centre for Performance Research in January 1994. Performance, Food and Cookery was part of the CPR's Points of Contact series and explored the piquant analogies and correlations between the processes of cooking and performance. However, not a single paper presented at Points of Contact #5: Performance, Food and Cookery was reproduced here, and only a few contributors to this issue actually attended the conference. The themes explored at that event and the connections made between ideas, people, processes and cuisines have continued to inspire me, nourish me and, at times, consume me with a passion that can only be described as a 'food disorder'. I am obsessed with food and performance, food in performance and food as performance: with the process of cooking and making theatre; with presentations at the table and on the stage; with the creative fervour of the kitchen and the rehearsal room, and with the very material of food as a medium for performance and as a model of performance: multisensory, processual and communal. But reproducing any of the extraordinary papers, presentations and demonstrations made at the 1994 conference, I am, however, deeply indebted to the many artists and scholars who presented at it. I am most especially grateful to my close collaborators, Judie Christie, Scott deLahunta and Celia Webb, who helped me stage what was an enormously challenging event and who have subsequently kept the dialogues and conversations around the themes alive and 'cooking'.

It was at this conference that we first encountered Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, who we had invited to deliver the keynote speech - Along the Alimentary Canal. Given her grasp and perspective on the connection between food and performance it seemed entirely appropriate to invite her to deliver what is, in effect, a keynote essay to this issue of Performance Research. Such was the enthusiasm with which she took up this task, and so sustained the dialogues we had along the way, that a vast opus was produced, a severely edited form of which we can only present here (still making it the longest essay to appear in Performance Research to date).

I am particularly pleased to include material from a 'young' generation of British scholars and practitioners - Emma Gowan, Dan Rebellato, Adrian Kear and Helen Hall - whose playful integration of film theory, critical theory, medical history, food writing, popular culture, and unpopuler cuisine make a sustainable contribution to this issue. So too do the pages 'prepared' by artists and chefs. Unable to rise to the challenge made by the team who have created the On Picking pages - which were to include 'scratch and sniff' cards and even taste swatches in their section - our artists' pages in this issue are mainly limited to illustrations of food events or cooking processes.

The work of celebrated Belgian Chef, Peter de Bell and his carousel kitchen is profiled in the photo essay of Prep and Eat. The initial proposal for A Temperature Menu by the extraordinary Spanish performance artist and gastronomic consultant Alicia Rios is included together with photographs of subsequent restagings and variations on the theme.

John Fox, who, with partner Sue Fox and Welfare State International, has created so many celebratory performance events integrating food and had such a major influence on British theatre since the mid-1980s, has created special wood-block prints for this issue. His essay has been further illustrated (thanks to Simon Josebury) with drawings, sketches and recipes from the Welfare State archive.

Within the project of Performance Studies, there