

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

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Leftovers was born as an investigative research project into how people as a whole interact and use the spaces they acquire and how it's left after they're done with the space/area. Coffee shops are synonymous with the dispersion of ideas and people coming together to share ideas. Acknowledging the passing of time and people and how they interact with places around them was a way I approached this project. Within graphic design, the concept of systems is profoundly rooted in form and process. The process of how we got where we did, what things did we look at and through which lenses what was the means of our documentation and what parameters were set in place. Leftovers is one such project, the process of observation and inquiry used for this project are well described in George Perec's 'The Street', 'The Neighborhood', and 'The Town' from 'Species of Spaces and Other Places' (1974). He mentions in his book to observe until the scene becomes improbable, to observe something almost stupidly and force oneself to write down what is of no interest, what is obvious, most common, and most colourless. To decipher the setting within which I sat was the core process for leftovers. Looking at people coming from various places to this small, interesting and cosy coffee shop, analyzing their interactions, how they choose their places to sit, how they greet, when they take their coats off if any, and how they leave. After a couple of days, the place was no longer familiar to me, I had to break all the preconceived notions about the place and really investigate it deeply to understand and observe again.

During this process, what caught my interest was the interactions people had with each other and ultimately with the structure around them. I started looking at how people leave their tables when they are done. They left behind used napkins, cups, glasses, plates, spoons, forks and sometimes empty bags of crisps as well. Acknowledging the passing of time and the people who have interacted with the shop by physically taking note of each thing left behind, and then compiling them into visually comprehensive data as a way of asking why did someone leave behind so many things when there was a bin not far away, what did they order and who cleans up after them. This led to the form of leftovers. A key example of this would be in 'Learning from Las Vegas' by Robert Venturi, et al (1972) where they present their opinion on the ideals of modernism that prevailed at the time and its rejection of ornamentation and expressive symbolism. Graphic communication design, and any other discipline, have to examine their assumptions and methods, and should not accept these as a given, because theoretical frameworks and methodologies, as well as material conditions, decidedly influence the (nature of the) outcome of that practice. The iconography in 'Learning from Las Vegas' and the system of design linguistic lends itself to deny the predefined notions of architectural system and creates something new which is well rooted in the purpose of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izanour. Leftover is also one such project whose concept of systems is profoundly rooted in form and process.