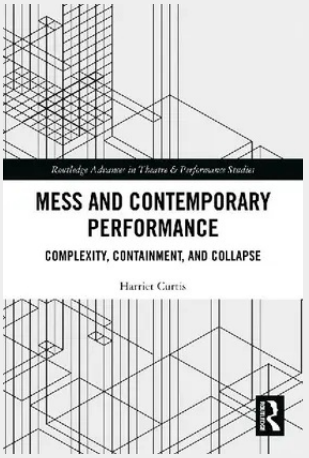
Curtis

# Mess and Contemporary Performance

Complexity, Containment, and Collapse




This book identifies and theorises mess in contemporary performance and argues that mess offers a site from which subjects might mobilise and find agency, even as the complexity (and indeed messiness) of everyday life conditions and contains. Using a queer feminist and intersectional critical framework, this book analyses how established and emerging artists mess with and mess up capitalist tendencies towards productivity, usefulness, and efficiency. Whilst the materiality of mess provides a starting point and emerges in many of the works analysed, the implications of mess as related to vulnerability, shame, and resistance occupy a larger space in the book's chapters. These performances are messy not only in content or style; they reveal critical readings of how perceived-as messy' subjects and practices are shaped and regulated. In attending to the public, personal, and structural uses of mess, and emphasising the critical possibilities of what might otherwise be skipped over or cleared away, this book develops and opens out shared understandings of mess as creative chaos and as a practice of political action or change. This book will be of particular interest to students and scholars incontemporary theatre, art, and performance.

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**62,05 €**
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*Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage*

**Artikelnummer:** 9781032034201
**Medium:** Buch
**ISBN:** 978-1-032-03420-1
**Verlag:** Routledge
**Erscheinungstermin:** 20.07.2026
**Sprache(n):** Englisch
**Auflage:** 1. Auflage 2026
**Serie:** Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies
**Produktform:** Kartoniert
**Gewicht:** 266 g
**Seiten:** 168
**Format (B x H):** 156 x 234 mm



**Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG**
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)