

Makeshift.

On Temporality and Temporariness in Artistic Production

Due to the “spatial turn”, recent investigations about objects of art and other socio-cultural phenomena have quite frequently reduced their perspective to the exploration of spatiality. Even though studies in the field of theatre and performance art have called into question a conceptualization of the “work of art” as durable and stable object and, in turn, highlighted the processuality of artistic practices, the question of temporality and temporariness in processes of artistic production still remains systematically unexplored.

Taking this assumption as a starting point, this Joint Symposium, on the one hand, sets out to examine and discuss the inherent temporalities in working procedures in the arts, focusing on movement, spontaneity, event, instantaneity, duration, ephemerality, contemporaneity, or memory. On the other hand, the symposium seeks to look at the ways in which artists', curators' and researchers' practices explore, challenge, subvert or creatively adapt economic models conceptions of work under the conditions of the temporary, provisory, and project-based. Thus, this seminar revolves around the question how artistic production relates to the quantifiable time of socio-economic life as well as to artists' and observers' subjective experiences and usages of time.

In this context, the notion of “makeshift” hints to intertwined processes of production and temporality as it refers to both “the making of” objects as well as to its diversions, contingencies, and instabilities. Literally, makeshifts or provisions serve to anticipate and foresee. Furthermore, they are shaped by temporal limitations. Because they are based on temporary, transitory, intermediate solutions whose sense can only be grasped by what follows – roughly outlined in the form of various possible future scenarios.

Besides the themes mentioned above, we will also explore the following questions:

- * What theoretical frameworks bear potential to stimulate a debate on temporality in the arts?
- * How do processuality and instantaneity, movement and immobility relate to each other?
- * What are the potentials of the provisory and the ephemeral in artistic processes, and where do they become pitfalls?
- * How are aesthetics of the provisory related to notions of contemporaneity, up-to-dateness or “being at the pulse of time”?
- * How do media embody techniques of the visualization and measurement of time?
- * To what extent can the distinction between non-commercial forms of self-organisation in the arts and neoliberal business strategies still be maintained – e.g. regarding new forms of increasingly rigid time management?

During the symposium, we aim to work in four groups on subtopics moderated by a doctoral fellow based on short presentations by the participants (max 10 min) and the reading of relevant texts which will be agreed upon in advance. The results of each subgroup will be presented during one session in order to share and discuss the results with the other participants.

(1) Ephemerality / Movement

In the last decade, phenomena related to the ephemeral and transitory have been in the focus of art history, philosophy, and cultural theory due to theoretical concepts that highlight the mobile, contingent, fluid, instantaneous, and eventful. One could even state that ephemerality – following the Greek word *ephemeros* as something that lasts only one day – has become the signature of modernity. Thus, the ephemeral in the arts, on the one hand, refers to the process inaugurated by the avant-gardes of the early 20th century of using movements as an artistic material instead of simply depicting or representing them. On the other hand, it also encapsulates a move away from durable objects of art towards transitory, often modular installations, architectures, or drafts that are intended to last a certain time span after which they are destroyed, transformed, or put to other uses. Thus, in this working group we want to explore questions related to these two assumptions by examining the ways in which artistic practices deal and experiment with movement and time – in regard to the temporality of the objects of art as well as the processes of artistic production. Furthermore, we want to discuss contemporary as well as historical examples of what could be perceived as “provisory art” and its relation to a demand for flexibility that the provisory also implies.

(2) Contemporaneity

In the context of political and social issues such as “globalisation”, the question of the “politicality” of art is being posed in the past few years with renewed vigour – and along with it the question of the contemporaneity of art. But what is contemporaneity? Is it a given property of contemporary art – in the banal sense of all the art which is being made *now*? Or shall we understand it as a more or less overt or subtle relation of particular artistic practices to general (social, political, cultural) issues, events and experiences? Is it confined to especially critical and (self-)reflexive art? Or is it rather a question of genre and medium and thus connected to certain practices, formats, and media which are qualified as *new* to the point that they require from the artist the mastery of cutting-edge technologies? This working group will on the one hand explore the *tempus* of contemporaneity: How temporary and ephemeral is this quality? Does it maintain a privileged relation to aesthetics of the provisory? And what happens with contemporaneity in time – how does it grow old? On the other hand, this working group will look at how the notion of contemporaneity is produced and coproduced– by the artists as well as other protagonists in the art community: gallerists, curators, art critics, academia etc.

(3) Archive

The relation of temporality and the arts not only involves their reference to the now and possible futures, but also to past events – and thus brings the question of recording, documentation, memory and the archive to the fore. In recent investigations concerning the history of knowledge and art, archives are no longer associated with the image of dust-covered paper piles. Rather, archives are conceptualized as inherently processual operations that define a politics of knowledge. This working group seeks to address the question in which ways the arts make use of or investigate archives as materials of artistic exploration of temporality. How do the arts perform and inventory collective and personal memories? Can the relation of art and archive serve as a starting point for inquiring processes of the production and politics of historical knowledge in the arts?

(4) Economies of Time

Whereas time management is usually understood as an efficient, rationalized use of one's time in terms of working productivity and the well-planned organization of tasks and projects to be accomplished in the near or more distant future, economies of time allude to the diversity of time practices, encompassing unpredictability, contingency, meandering, procrastination, boredom, or profusion. This working group aims at discussing the ways and forms of dealing with time, its socio-political structures and cultural values in contemporary artistic practices. How can we conceive of the relation of art, economy, and everyday life regarding the economies of time? In which ways can the seemingly discipline-less forms of “time waste” be perceived as subversive tactics of refusing time organization? To what extent do economic strategies embrace the “creative”, self-managed time practices within their requirement profile that were previously reserved primarily to art?