

# SEEMINGLY INCURABLE SENSATION OF TEMPORAL AMBIGUITY

3.9. – 9.10.2021

## A Speculative Lexicon of Some Time-based Concepts

**Apocalypse** - A form of violent vision of the end of all this, the first recorded apocalypse is attributed to the Zoroastrians. Imposing linearity on the endless cycles, inscribing a meaning to history that is driven by the logic of vengeance. Its invention saw the birth of anxiety about the future. Now we live in endless end times.

**Anachronism** - A chronological inconsistency. Waiting for signs of extra-terrestrial life we find out the ancient astronauts arrived from the future a long time ago.

**Atemporal** - Neither ancient or modern, the condition of being ungoverned or unchanged by time, completely free from the limitations of time. One of the common qualities of dreams.

**The Beginning** - A story is always a reversal of time, in which beginnings are chosen for the endings we hope to arrive at. Beginnings appear when reality assumes a narratability. They are the first stone laid in the construction of significance in the search for coherence. The work is finished when it's beginning reappears.

**Clock-watching** - Turning time into a substance. Clock time is a means of measuring the wait between occurrences. Killing time while time kills you. However, to be denied a clock to orientate yourself in time is a form of torture whereby time swells into a solid mass that engulfs you. Hence the prisoner's ordered scratches on the wall in an attempt to anchor themselves to this civilised construct, desperate to divide days so as not to suffocate in time's mass.

**Chronological Intelligence** - We know how to measure time. We know what time is as long as we don't have to explain it. It is a useful fiction that structures lives. Einstein called it a 'stubbornly persistent illusion'. Programming AI machines to have a sense of the temporal is complex. The consciousness of time is a uniquely human folly. We are all clocks that don't quite agree.

**The Contemporary** - A category that negates itself because it relies on the endless replenishing potential of all things modern that is produced by neoliberalism's intensely futural composition of time. History is not progress. Everything is temporary.

**Deus Ex Machina** - A plot device whereby a seemingly unsolvable problem is resolved by an unexpected and unlikely occurrence. Chance, fate, hope, promise, luck, doom, omen; useful tools for those moments when you just don't have the time to wait and see how all of this will turn out.

**Deep Time** - A time that authors mountains. Impossible for humans to grasp this texture of the ages, an unfathomable palimpsest of erosion and compression, utterly indifferent to our brief blip on this ancient rock.

**DNA** - The Denisovans are a recently discovered species of archaic human whose genome was first sequenced in 2008 from a centimetre of female finger bone found in Denisova Cave in Siberia. Though they were not Homo Sapiens they did interbreed with them. Traces of their DNA are evident in modern humans, especially a gene believed to confer some immunity against SARS-CoV-2. You never know how the past will turn out.

**Eile Mit Weile** - Festina lente, make haste slowly. A hare and a tortoise, a crab and a butterfly, a dolphin and an anchor. Tell me a story I already know.

**Entropy** - The inevitable and irreversible disordering of the universe over time. You cannot put an egg back together again.

**The End** - unlikely to conclude happily ever after. It would be better to consider how we should grieve the loss of all our co-created fantasies. Fictions have consequences.

**Futuring** - The belief that the future will be better than the present is not a natural idea, it is born of modernity's obsession with accumulation, whose logic necessitates a brighter future to make all of this worth it in the end.

**Hauntology** - The nostalgia for a time that never arrived, the way that the past haunts the future like a ghost stuck in an unrequited longing for a dead lover. Time is out of joint and we are all its unreliable narrators.

**Irony** - A joke told in the future about the past. When you arrive at all those bridges you said you would cross when you came to them and realise that chance is just chaos pretending it has a punchline to tell.

**Lifespan** - Living is dying, we decay like old fruit, it will all be over at some point.

**Memory** - Hoarding a degenerating version of the past in the present in order to define the future.

**Mortichnia** - The death march of a living creature that is then preserved as a fossil footprint. In 2002 the mortichnia of a horseshoe crab was found in lithographic limestone in Bavaria. The trail measured 9.7m and was left about 150 million years ago.

**Musical time** - a means of defining the silence between sounds.

**Ouroboricism** - The repetitive compulsive behaviour we engage in, like that of the snake eating its own tail. You may have the illusion you are moving forward but only in a series of interlocking vicious circles.

**Precondition of Clairvoyance** - At the age of fifteen Rudolph Steiner believed he had gained a complete understanding of time in a dream which enabled him to intuit time in a non-linear way and thus achieve a higher understanding of existence.

**Premeditation** - When see what you see what you have already chosen to believe, so you kill the person holding a banana because you think they might be about to shoot you.

**Pre-enactment** - Exploring the potentiality of the future using fictional constructs to intuit the 'what-if' the 'if only' and the 'if-this-goes-on'.

**The Present** - The perpetually perishing moment, the endless and indivisible now. A moving object is neither where it is, nor where it is not, so don't go chasing waterfalls. Real time has no instants.

**Rhapsodic Interval** - The time it takes to have a perfect idea, and the indeterminate time spent circling before that happens.

**Time** - It's just one damned thing after another. Otherwise known as the indefinite, continued progress of existence that occurs in apparently irreversible succession.

**Tragedy** - An unfolding catastrophe that was avoidable with the benefit of hindsight.

**Time travel** - Widely considered to be a 19th century narrative invention, inspired by the new historical consciousness that arose from the rapid social changes brought about by the industrial revolution. To time travel is to be released from capitalisms hold over time.

**Waiting** - A form of longing sharpened by doubt. Much in life pivots on how you endure doubt. As the Taliban were want to say to the occupying forces "You have the watches, but we have the time".

- Leila Peacock

Leila Peacock's exhibition text lists a lexicon of speculative words, expressions, sayings, glossaries around the notion of time, recalling the long history and complexity of the concept. The use of literary strategies is central to Peacock's art practice, in what Derrida calls 'inventions which belong to literature while deforming its limits'. Her work plunders the space between drawing, writing and editing, between essay and cartoon, poem and diagram. Leila Peacock is a UK-born artist, living and working in Zurich (leilapeacock.com).

The exhibition is supported by:  
*philaneo*

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Special opening hours:  
Thu-Sun, 12:00-00:00

1. Initiated by Daniel V. Keller, the research project Lithic Alliance engages with the lithosphere as an active agent in the construction of relationships and polyphonic agencies in a more-than-human world. With the 2-channel video installation "Counting Backwards / Notes on Erasure", Lithic Alliance explores the changing quality of mineral material and the information and energies stored in it, exposing the public to a vibrating countdown that reminds us of the current reality of our solid, but ever changing world. Daniel V. Keller lives and works in Bruxelles (lithicalliance.org).

2. Instead of performances, Mein Verein makes sessions; instead of artworks, Mein Verein produces protocols, gestures, actions, activities and narrative strategies. With this work, schedules, reports, routines, timetables from members of the collective are made available to take away as performance instructions to be reenacted individually. The content of the notes sheds light on the limitations of time and how most lives are structured by time, especially in relation to childcare work and other unpaid jobs. It also brings forward the idea that a separation between art and everyday life turns out to be obsolete. Mein Verein was founded in 2016 and has since been active in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

3. Janosch Perler's visual language translates into a new work "Tàolù", a 24-minute film tribute to the Chinese art of Tai-chi or the 'uninterrupted flow of life'. The successive images depict the course of an entire day from early morning to late evening, resulting in a continuous and observatory flow on people, their routines, architecture, and the surrounding landscape. These moments are captured from a single location: a balcony on the 4th floor of a residential building in the centre of Biel/Bienne. Janosch Perler is an artist based in Biel/Bienne (janosch-perler.ch).

4. The wax-covered fruits present in Paulo Wirz's work "Ponto Cruz" reveal their inevitable decay and the natural world that surrounds us. These organic elements are enveloped in pale colored wax and carefully placed on top of a mirrored surface reminiscent of a board game. The relationship between the decay and the closed-circuit of the board subtly relates to the relationship between memory and reality – in particular the instability of memories, or the human brain as a limited system, yet with infinite potential. Paulo Wirz was born in Pindamonhangaba, Brazil, and lives and works in Zurich.

5. Colin Raynal's practice spans from text, sound, performance and all that lies in between. As a response to the exhibition topic, he offers thoughts, reflections, moments – a poetic text titled "Il sera toujours tard" embraces the walls of the space. During the opening, he is also giving an effortful performance where he tirelessly repeats the word "OK" until collapse. Colin Raynal lives and works in Neuchâtel (colinraynal.ch).

6. "Clockwatchers" is a surreal remake of the 90s American film of the same name by Jill Sprecher. The 3D-animated adaptation follows a character who starts working as an assistant at "Global Credit" where she experiences the repercussions of meritocratic wage-based labour and the commodification of time – bored and convincing herself of the relentless credo "I work, therefore I am". When things mysteriously go missing at the office, the protagonist's body starts to disintegrate, haunted, transformed and liberated by another body of nature, somehow implying that new technologies are shaping our identities and our understanding of freedom. Elin Gonzalez lives and works in Basel while Callum Ross is based in Lausanne (elingonzalez.ch).

7. Jodok Wehrli often deals with the absurdity of subjective interpretation, which has intensified in the recent decades under the influence of the new media. At the core of "Close Enough" is the contemporary obsession of measurability which comes from the ideas of 'human over nature'. From social to health aspects, almost everything today is scientifically judged according to a measuring device or counting scale. "Close Enough" is a direct reference to the fragility of these measured values. The clock (as object or instrument) continuously follows its intended purpose, but when looking at it carefully, it unveils its inability to produce irrevocable or fixed truths – just as the plummets cord: it points downwards but is continuously moved by its surroundings. Jodok Wehrli is an artist based in Basel.

8. "Timeless Time" is part of a collection sourced for the installation "It's my party and I'll die if I want to" (2019). The collection consisted of a series of consumption goods whose branding name refers to a negation of time, like Cadbury's chocolate bars "Time Out" or the chewing gums "NoTime". The open cigarette packages are shown for the first time in a frame. Stripped bare from their products, they are reminiscent of a moment faded into smoke. Time as something you can consume, something you can have agency on and reclaim as your own. Susan Sontag wrote that AIDS is a disease of time, a progression. Time is what is taken away from sick communities that gather around it to protect each other. Real Madrid is a collective formed in 2015 and based between Geneva and Berlin (realrealmadrid.com).

9. Isabelle Richner proposes an installation with two sculptural objects, two small paintings and a sound recording. She explains: "These elements are reminiscent of bodies, undefined, with changing dimensions. These objects are waiting, like props on a stage awaiting an activation, a presence, or a narrative. They question the notion of absence and time. An absence that is experienced as an interruption of form, a subtraction, an oblivion, an unfinished work. Time seems to stand still. The sound recording is the result of research into the sensation of suspended time; the sounds that surround us in everyday life and are then forgotten. Isabelle Richner lives and works in Biel.

1. Lithic Alliance  
*Counting Backwards / Notes on Erasure, 2020*  
2-channel video, son, vibrations, 1h45 min  
Courtesy de l'artiste

2. Mein Verein  
*a performance a day keeps the doctor away, 2021*  
Instructions de performance à emporter  
Courtesy des artistes

3. Janosch Perler  
*Tàolù, 2021*  
Vidéo sur deux projections, 24 min  
Courtesy de l'artiste

4. Paulo Wirz  
*Ponto Cruz, 2018-2021*  
Fruits, cire paraffin, tuiles miroir, 150 x 300cm  
Courtesy de l'artiste

5. Colin Raynal  
*Il sera toujours tard, 2021*  
A3 texte sur mur  
Courtesy de l'artiste

6. Elin Gonzalez & Callum Ross  
*Clockwatchers, 2021*  
Film d'animation 3D, 23 min  
Courtesy des artistes

7. Jodok Wehrli  
*Close Enough, 2019-2021*  
Horloge, plummet, 50 x 200 x 300 cm  
Courtesy de l'artiste

8. Real Madrid  
*Timeless Time, 2021*  
Paquets de cigarette, cadre, 50 x 80 cm  
Courtesy des artistes

9. Isabelle Richner  
*pending invite, 2021*  
Sculptures, tableaux, son  
Courtesy de l'artiste

