

Affective imagination as a form of temporal resistance in technocapitalism

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Abstract: In the technocapitalist regime of accelerating and quantifying attention, disorder does not betray a deficit, but opens up cracks: fragile spaces where affect can become counter-temporality. *Disordered* attention, as Claire Bishop envisions it, is no longer an error, but a poetic gesture of perception that refuses productive synchronisation. Attentional disorder no longer signals failure, but becomes a gateway to another temporality. Thus, drawing on the theories of Sara Ahmed and Brian Massumi, but also marking the ontological substratum envisaged by Martin Heidegger, we explore how affect – melancholy, delay, boredom – does not constitute a pathology, but a silent resistance that dislocates the productive rhythm and creates sensitive breaches in the perceptive infrastructure of the present. Art, in these contexts, no longer seeks to clarify, but to suspend, to invite a melancholic derivation of time, where melancholy and delay become forms of subtle resistance. In this economy of deviation, affect not only disrupts rhythm, but opens up a minor politics of imagination – a different time, that is impossible to capture.

Keywords: affective imagination, temporal resistance, technocapitalism.

1. Introduction

The problem of disorder, in the philosophical sense, has navigated Western thought for many decades – not defined as pure chaos, but rather as a potential fissure through which another type of order could emerge. From Pascal's description of the human condition to Bergson's lived experience of duration (*durée*), or from the emancipatory discontinuities identified in Foucault's archaeology of power to the deterritorialisation of becoming in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, disorder has not mainly revealed itself as simple deviation, but has instead materialised an immanent, generative, disruptive force. In this tradition, what Claire Bishop currently articulates as “disorderly attention”, a characteristic belonging to a rhythmicity specific to algorithmic society (in the literal sense or as industrialised ordering/order), can be read beyond the semantic colour referring to the presence of an omnipresent deficit of perception, becoming, in fact, a symptom of a profound temporal

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disagreement: between the measurable time of technocapitalist governance and the ungovernable time of affect.

Attention does not disappear. It retreats, breaks, circulates through spaces where the conditions for the constitution of a horizon of expectation are not met. In an age of endless notifications and algorithmic repetition, what we call “disordered attention” is not an error, but a form of survival of the senses, it is the body that refuses to jump on command. It is a poetic derivation of perception, an insubordination that disturbs the tranquillity of productivity.

Claire Bishop sees in this troubled attention a problem of reception, symptoms of an exhausted relationship between art and the viewer. But what if, on the contrary, disorder is precisely the space in which perception is freed from the burden of meaning? What if, in fact, distraction does not signal absence, but proposes a form of temporal (affective) tactility, manifested through a crack, an opening through which the body feels the rhythm of the world differently? Because time, under the auspices of technocapitalism, no longer flows, but pulsates in spikes of attention or losses similar to reverie. We are now living in a quantified, monetised time, accelerated to the point of absence, and the chronopolitics is one of colonisation of the senses: a regime in which the gaze must produce, retain, consume. But the body is not an algorithm. It falls into daydream, stops and wanders. Affect then becomes the place where time breaks down and recomposes itself into informal forms: sigh, melancholy, disgust, waiting. Affect refuses the temporal pressure both to convert and to be turned into a familiar and easily manoeuvrable feeling.

This configures a diversion of meaning: what if disordered attention were not a failure of aesthetic reception, but rather its reconfiguration? What if the distracted viewer were not absent, but already attuned to a different rhythm, a different pulse, a time that capital cannot instrumentalise? With industrialisation, the regulation of time became inseparable from the regulation of bodies. Taylorist time, broadcast time, algorithmic time, each marks an era of chronopolitical management of attention, the subject always already being timed.

But affect persists where time is most densely managed. Affect appears as delay, as deviation, as interruption. Melancholy arises not as lack, but as a gesture of refusal. Boredom converts the impression of emptiness, being in fact saturation without exit. Forms of affect thus become not pathologies, but “minor temporalities” – what Walter Benjamin would have called *jetztzeit*, time open to something else.

Art that produces affective distortion is not limited to contemplation, but activates friction, a sense of searching. This friction is not sterile; it is speculative. Following Brian Massumi's idea of affect as unformed potential in the wake of Arjun Appadurai's concept of imagination as a collective faculty for triggering action, the article updates the phrase “disordered attention”, crossing

the initial field of the intentional and its deviations towards a different meaning: disorder as a decoupling from the techno-capitalist rhythm. External disorder thus triggers the birth of this minor inner temporality that gives way to the manifestation of a form of affective imagination: the bodily capacity to feel other temporalities, other lives, which are not yet actualised but are already present in the fibre of perception.

By analysing the works of Mircea Suciú and Dumitru Gorzo – works that stop, disturb, disorientate the audience– we can see how art can function as a space for temporal sabotage. Their aesthetic operations offer no redemption or clarity. Instead, they open a breach in the temporal regime of capital, staging not utopia, but rupture—an invitation to imagine differently, to feel time differently.

2. Technocapitalism and the chronopolitics of attention

2.1. Technocapitalism and temporal infrastructure

Under the technocapitalist regime, time no longer flows, executes, or accompanies life, but precedes it, constrains it and measures it before it has happened. The clock becomes an algorithm and duration becomes a commodity. Jonathan Crary observes that, in 24/7 capitalism, time is emptied of human consistency, becoming an instrument of perceptual capture: “Sleep poses the idea of a human need and interval that cannot be colonised and that has no value as an instrument of productivity”¹. In this world without night and without forgetting, the pause becomes a dysfunction, and sleep – the last bastion of somatic resistance.

Franco Berardi defines this mutation as a hyperacceleration of subjectivity: thinking is replaced by reaction, reflection by impulse. “When the social body is wired by techno-linguistic automatisms, it acts as a swarm: a collective organism whose behaviour is automatically directed by connected interfaces.”² The subject becomes an open mechanism, always ready to be activated, available on demand. In this affective economy, Brian Massumi sees a regime of pre-capture, in which it is not what is expressed that matters, but what can be felt in advance: “The ability of affect to produce an economic effect more swiftly and surely than economics itself means that affect is a real condition, an intrinsic variable of the late capitalist system, as infrastructural as a factory.”³

Attention becomes transactional energy, a psychic valence convertible into clicks, data, performance indices. It is no longer enough to look – we must be detectable, quantifiable, reactive. Technocapitalism constructs an invisible architecture of temporality that not only manages our time, but trains the way we feel it.

¹ Jonathan Crary (2013). *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, Verso, London, p. 10.

² Franco Berardi (2012). *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance*, MIT Press, London, p. 14.

³ Brian Massumi (2002). *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Duke University Press, Durham, p. 45.

Massumi⁴ observes that the unequal exchange between money and time becomes the essence of this exploitation: subjects sell their lived duration – that is, life itself – in order to gain access to the future. Time is fragmented, inscribed in flesh and converted into productivity. Thus, at the heart of neoliberalism lies a clock that extracts.

2.2. Chrononormativity and the politics of speed

If technocapitalism extracts time, chronopolitics disciplines and normalises it. In this regard, Paul Virilio⁵ states that speed not only accelerates movement, it also deactivates thinking. In a world where speed becomes the norm, waiting becomes a form of error. Thus, the right to hesitate is lost.

Elizabeth Freeman calls this structuring of life into productive stages *chrononormativity* – a silent regime that assigns functions to time: education, career, reproduction. “Chrononormativity uses time to organise individual human bodies towards maximum productivity.”⁶ To live “on time” means to be correctly inserted into this sequence. To deviate means to dislocate the social semantic layer of duration.

Sara Ahmed⁷ adds an affective dimension to these norms: “institutional time” regulates not only actions, but also emotions. In this sense, affect becomes institutional choreography: we learn not only what to feel, but *when* to feel it. Ahmed notes that dissonant affects – sadness, anger, discomfort – fall out of this regulated rhythm. They slow down, interrupt, dislocate. In institutional logic, they are treated as dysfunctional. In critical logic, they become fissures—moments of confusion that refuse synchronisation. Thus, affect becomes the counter-politics of temporal rhythm.

2.3. The economy of attention as psychopolitical infrastructure

Bernard Stiegler⁸ analyses “hyperattention” as a symptom of a society in which consciousness is captured through overstimulation, as it is no longer just a mental act, but an affective, regulated infrastructure with the potential for extraction and redistribution. Crary⁹ adds that this attention is not new, nor has it changed radically, but rather intensified: historically, it has been disciplined by school, industry, and the media, but in digital capitalism, it is directly monetised in an intrusive form that attempts to offer no breaks from production, reverie or retreat into inaction – a context that was otherwise understood in the

⁴ Brian Massumi (2015). *The Politics of Affect*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

⁵ Paul Virilio (1997). *Open Sky*, Verso, London.

⁶ Elizabeth Freeman (2010). *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Duke University Press, Durham, p. 3.

⁷ Sara Ahmed (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*, Duke University, Durham.

⁸ Claire Bishop (2012). *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London.

⁹ Jonathan Crary, *op. cit.*

past as a possible trigger for the imagination. Xavier de Maistre¹⁰, author of *Le voyage autour de ma chambre*, proposed a fictional detour set in motion by imagination instead of an *embodied* experience. But today, the gaze becomes metric, the gesture is monetised, and the pause is seen as a loss for the profile of the master who becomes his own slave and vice versa. In a 24/7 regime, attention is not only consumed, nor even hypervigilant, as described by Bernard Stiegler, but exhausted.

Consciousness becomes “available brain time” – a cynical expression used in the French media industry and analysed by Stiegler¹¹ as a symptom of profound psychological colonisation. The absence of free thought fractures the compass of attention into exploitable intervals. In this context, slowing down is not a cognitive error, but a political gesture. Slow-paced reflection becomes a form of resistance to the accelerated economy of perception. That is why Stiegler proposes the defence of deliberate attention not only as an individual practice, but as a fundamental right of the digital subject.

2.4. Disorder of attention as an affective strategy

In this regulated territory of perception, disorder is not an error – it is a strategy. It appears as a small form of visceral resistance: a wandering gaze, a delay in thought, a refusal to react immediately that becomes an involuntary act of protest. When faced with the works of Mircea Suciú and Dumitru Gorzo, Romanian artists who work with intrinsic temporalities, the viewer is not informed, but rather turned (back) onto their own affectivity: an encounter with a delayed time that may not belong to them, a state that is not aligned with current narratives, a deviation from the imposed meaning.

These artistic practices do not demand understanding, but signal fracture, demand disorientation, awakening from the supposed “presence”. In front of them, time refuses to be perceived in linearity – it bends, suspends itself, overlaps with the unknown, so that ambiguity becomes tactical, repetition becomes a calculated slowdown, and melancholy becomes the forcing of time dilation. Their art is no longer a medium of transmission, but a staging of the fracturing of tempo.

The “disorder of attention” invoked by Claire Bishop is thus a form of critical aesthetics. It does not oppose the frontal system, but short-circuits it from within. It creates delays that become breathing spaces, pauses that give the subject the possibility to feel time differently – not as a vector of productivity, but as the elastic matter of perception. In this small deviation – a moment of wandering, an affective hesitation – a possible reconfiguration of temporal

¹⁰ Xavier de Maistre (2003). *Le voyage autour de ma chambre*, Flammarion, Paris.

¹¹ Bernard Stiegler (2010). *Taking care of youth and the generations*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

politics is born. Here, affect is no longer synchronised, but liberated. It no longer flows in the imposed stream, but creates counter-flow rhythms.

Where time is command, disordered attention becomes counterpoint.

3. Affect as temporal distortion

Far from being a simple reaction or personal emotion, affect is currently interpreted as having a collective character, ontologically necessary for relationships, a density that “sticks” (as Sara Ahmed points out), a way in which time becomes unstable in the body, because it is not strictly anchored in any “time” – present, past, future. Ahmed nuances these overlaps by referring to the notion of “flashing” (“the flicker in the corner of the eye signalling the presence of the stranger, which registers as a disturbance on the skin before we have recognised the stranger as a stranger”¹²).

“Before we are affected, before something happens that creates an impression on the skin, things are already in place that incline us to be affected in some ways more than others. To read affect we need better understandings of this “in place”, and how the “in place” involves psychic and social dimensions, which means that the “in place” is not always in the same place. For example, the flicker is more likely to become an emotion that we retrospectively recognise as fear in places that are already given affective value as fearsome (the 'rough neighbourhood' is one that we anticipate to be frightening), or for somebody whose body remembers other flickers becoming frightening.”¹³

Affect cannot be narrated or explained in this way, because it does not come after the event, but surrounds it, opens it up. “Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects”¹⁴. Brian Massumi, on the other hand, describes affect as “an autonomous residue” that escapes consciousness and linearity, an intensity “that cannot be fully actualised at a given moment”¹⁵. Affect produces a subtle desynchronisation: between event and interpretation, between the present and what is felt beyond it.

“For Massumi, emotion is 'qualified intensity' or 'a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of experience which is from that point onward defined as personal', while affects are 'in-tensity' that is unqualified and beyond narrative (2002b: 28).”¹⁶

This desynchronisation is more than poetic, it is political. Lauren Berlant called it “slow death”: not sudden death, but a slow, systemic wear and tear, a

¹² Sara Ahmed (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*, Duke University, Durham, p. 231.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Sara Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁵ Brian Massumi (1995). *The Autonomy of Affect*, in “Cultural Critique”, no. 31, pp. 83-109.

¹⁶ Sara Ahmed (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*, Duke University, Durham, p. 24.

chronology of exhaustion experienced at a slow pace¹⁷. Bodies that survive, do not progress, can no longer keep up with productive time and, in this dislocation, create another way of living duration, one that is dissonant, often invisible.

3.1. Micropolitics of disrupted attention

Massumi states that: “Affect is autonomous. It is unqualified. As such, it is not ownable or recognisable. It is not what is felt or displayed. It is that feeling of having been moved”¹⁸. Moreover, affect is defined by the capacity to affect and be affected: “Affect is the capacity to affect and be affected”¹⁹. This means that affect is primarily a domain of potentiality – an open field in which movement, attention and time are always on the verge of being modulated. It is “movement felt in the body before it becomes action or emotion”²⁰. Affect occurs in the interval – between stimulus and response, between perception and expression, between social times and lived temporality.

What artistic practices generate is not just another aesthetic, but a micropolitics of perception – a regime of sensitivity that disrupts the dominant norms of rapid attention and immediate meaning. Brian Massumi proposes an understanding of affect as pre-individual intensity, a “field of virtualities” that precedes both consciousness and interpretation²¹. Thus, affect does not align itself with the logics of rapid signification, but persists in a hesitant, desynchronised time.

When viewing Mircea Suciuc's works, the gaze is not guided by a single narrative or symbol, but is absorbed in a visual melancholy that suspends clarity (historical, “Chantal Akerman interdisciplinary biographies in a theatre of care”, 2018). When viewing Dumitru Gorzo's works, discontinuity, irony and absurdity fragment any attempt at perceptual coherence. Time multiplies, breaks, expands, passing through the artist's body to materialise unfinished and continuously beyond itself or the work. Art no longer offers solutions, but delays.

These delays are not mere pauses. They function as zones of affective reverberation, where perception becomes unstable and time is felt as latency. Nick Srnicek²², in *Platform Capitalism*, describes how platforms value only what can be quantified, reacted to, updated. In this landscape, any form of perception that does not produce data becomes useless. Art that refuses to deliver immediate meaning or reaction thus becomes a political anomaly of perception: it cultivates a time that cannot be extracted or measured.

¹⁷ Lauren Berlant (2007). *Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)*, in “Critical Inquiry”, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 754-780.

¹⁸ Brian Massumi (2002). *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Duke University Press, p. 35.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. xvii.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²² Nick Srnicek (2017). *Platform Capitalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

This delay is a form of affective resistance. Not a frontal refusal, but a subtle deviation, a gap between impulse and reaction, between image and understanding. To look without understanding. To remain. To feel without formulating. In such moments, attention is converted into affect, and affect is converted into a form of temporal disobedience. Gilles Deleuze called this type of reaction a minor gesture: “an imperceptible deviation that bypasses dominant structures without confronting them head-on”²³. The minor, in the Deleuzian sense, does not mean marginal, but deviant: it is a movement that undermines the norm through an imperceptible variation, a delay or a change of rhythm that reconfigures the space of the possible.

In the context of this article, the minor gesture corresponds exactly to the manifestation of that form of disordered affective attention which, instead of reacting according to algorithmic expectations, produces a silent rupture in the functional chronology of perception. Thus, art becomes not only a space for aesthetic expression, but a minor infrastructure through which affect can reimagine our relationship with time—not through great revolutions, but through the subtle ability to feel differently.

3.2. Slow affects: interruptions and potentiality

Attention is, therefore, more than a simple cognitive act. It becomes an affective configuration: a bodily state that shapes the way we relate to the surrounding world. In this sense, *disordered attention* is already an expression of an affective relationship modified by time – a form of perception that withdraws, hesitates or reconfigures itself in the face of an imposed rhythm. Sara Ahmed herself proposes a reading of affect as a form of bodily orientation: “Emotions do things: they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments”²⁴. Thus, affects shape not only what we feel, but also how we align ourselves temporally with spaces, institutions, expectations.

Slow affects – sadness, fatigue, melancholy, shame – are not “dysfunctional”, as neoliberal logic might consider them to be. They are moments of resistance, and Ahmed develops a theory of affect as a force of institutional misalignment. She argues that emotions are not just individual experiences, but *orientation devices* – ways in which bodies align (or do not align) with the dominant norms of social life²⁵. In this sense, affect not only expresses but also regulates the relationships between social bodies and institutional temporalities. Emotions such as shame, sadness or anger do not appear in isolation, but in the context of a failed alignment – they become

²³ Gilles Deleuze (1977). *Dialogues*, Flammarion, Paris, p. 129.

²⁴ Sara Ahmed (2004). *Affective Economies*, in “Social Text”, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 117-139.

²⁵ Sara Ahmed (2006). *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Duke University Press, Durham.

indications that something is misaligned. Thus, affect is not passive: it can break synchronisation, generate deviation, propose a different rhythm. Feminist sadness or *queer* anger thus become not only expressions, but ways of breaking the affective alignment of the subject with the institution, with the rule, with the dominant temporality.

Berlant²⁶ observes that these states not only slow down, but create durations. Slow *death* is a form of disaffiliated temporality, in which the body can no longer participate in the narrative of progress. It lives on the sidelines, in delay, in what cannot be represented by performance graphs. Affective time becomes a form of silent chronopolitics: a drain of duration that can no longer be quantified.

3.3. Suspension, obstruction, reverie: aesthetics of temporal disruption

Where affect cannot be absorbed by the economy, aesthetics begins. Art that works with slow affects produces more than representations – it creates rhythms. In installations that demand patience, in films of irregular duration, in performative works marked by silence or stagnation, affect becomes compound time. The audience is invited not to understand, but to fall into a certain state. This state is often a blockage – an unspoken pause, a suspended time.

This suspension is productive: it gives shape to an affective reality that cannot be rushed. In long-duration performances, in slow art or in the aesthetics of the sick body – as described by the project *Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time*²⁷ – time is negotiated with fragility. Rhythm is unpredictable, affective, alive.

These artistic forms do not merely “reflect” affect. They create affect through rhythm. In this sense, affect becomes a compositional force: a dynamic that folds time, makes it hesitate, contort. This is the temporal distortion that art can cultivate – a time that no longer follows the commanded line, but transpires through skin, gaze and memory.

3.4. Affect as counter-temporality

In a regime that pushes for constant affective performance, affects that slow down become counter-temporal, as they do not fit into the chronology of success, in fact disrupting those *happiness scripts*, as Sara Ahmed calls them, which announce to the individual when they should be satisfied and when they should smile. Stepping outside these scripts involves precisely a different movement through time: staying longer, leaving earlier, not showing up at all,

²⁶ Lauren Berlant (2007). *Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)*, in “Critical Inquiry”, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 754-80.

²⁷ Taraneh Fazeli (2017). *Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time: Against Capitalism’s Temporal Bullying*, Artists Space, New York.

and Mircea Suciú and Dumitru Gorzo compose their works precisely with these alterities.

Affect thus becomes a temporal agent, a shaper of rhythm, duration, sequence. The rupture with algorithmic time – a time of automatic anticipation, prediction and reaction – is not merely a dysfunction, but a possibility: it opens up a space for affective imagination. In the sense formulated by Arjun Appadurai, imagination is not an aesthetic fantasy, but a “staging ground for action”²⁸ – a stage in which affective subjectivity exercises its capacity to prefigure other ways of life. When the body breaks out of its algorithmic rhythm, when it stops, when it gets stuck in a slow or unproductive affect, it does not cease to be political – on the contrary, it takes on another vector: that of affective becoming, or perhaps re-becoming, namely a kind of rewriting of Ahmed's *in place*. In this sense, affect functions not only as a distortion of time, but as a force of collective reimagination. In the gaps produced by sadness, reverie, anger or exhaustion, micro-temporalities open up that are imperceptible to platforms, but essential for resistance.

The article's proposal thus takes shape: that affective dislocation of attention – what Claire Bishop has called *disordered attention* – is not a failure of participation, but the beginning of a counter-politics of time. The art that supports this dislocation does not require quantification, but a presence outside the norm. It invites another affective organisation of perception – one that, through rupture, opens the field to a politics of affective imagination. Affect thus becomes a temporal agent: not just an experience, but a force that shapes rhythm, duration, sequence. Affect does not just disturb time – it reclaims it.

4. Art as affective rhythm and temporal resistance

4.1. Art doesn't demand attention, it unsettles it

In the regime of totalising attention, in which every perceptual gesture is subject to quantification, art can no longer be received in the key of classical contemplation, of former focus or strict understanding, but through affective availability. Today's works take us out of rhythm, art crossing the status of object towards a form of affective rhythm – a pulsation in time that disrupts our synchronisation with the world. Contemporary art, in its slow, repetitive, performative or almost impossible to decode forms, produces not only content, but this temporal gap. It creates those 'chrononormativities' described by Freeman above: areas where normative time is suspended and the body is retrained to feel duration differently²⁹. It is no longer a question of narrative, although it seems to integrate it as a support – at least in the case of the two Romanian artists – but of an intensity that disturbs our inner chronology.

²⁸ Arjun Appadurai (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

²⁹ Elizabeth Freeman, *op. cit.*

4.2. Aesthetics of slowing down

The emergence of an aesthetic of slowing down is not new – *slow art*, *durational performance*, *crip time*. These artistic forms oppose accelerated and industrial temporality through a micro-politics of rhythm, that is, through precise interventions in the perceptual regime of everyday life. Slowing down is not just a formal strategy, but a counter-politics of feeling and temporality that contradicts the norms imposed by the logic of technological and economic efficiency.

As Jonathan Crary notes, continuous capitalism “erodes forms of community and political expression, damaging the fabric of everyday life”³⁰. Against this backdrop, art that demands time – or rather, that *gives* time – becomes once again a space for collective experimentation on ways of being together. Arden Reed states that “slow art triggers the contemplative experience once solicited by sacred images and texts”³¹, suggesting that slow artistic perception does not produce clarity, but reverie and misalignment, and the contemplative is no longer (necessarily) associated with depth, but is combined with this imaginative dislocation that offers, in exchange, even a new location – that of the common imaginative artistic space. In other words, a possible relational imagination with artistic reality.

Lauren Berlant develops the idea of an affective temporality of the impasse – a state in which the present extends without direction, suspending normative narratives of progress. “The impasse is a holding station that doesn't hold securely: a sense of the world that is not entire, and yet it provides the affective atmosphere of the present”³². Here, slowed-down time becomes a zone of diffuse intensity – a “durational affect” that keeps open the possibility of another becoming.

Byung-Chul Han warns, in turn, that contemporary aesthetics is often subject to the same pressure to perform as work: “The compulsion of achievement turns even play into labour”³³. In this context, art that slows down is not a retreat, but a deliberate interruption of the compulsive obsession with success – a space where affect is not anchored in performance, but in suspension.

4.3. Misaligned times: art, affect, becoming

When art fractures time, it offers a rare opportunity: rediscovering time as a space for becoming, not as an obligation. Thus, from *disordered attention* – initially seen as a pathology of the digital age – we observe, in fact, the definition of an aesthetic of temporal distortion. Art does not correct attention, but derails

³⁰ Jonathan Crary, *op. cit.*

³¹ Arden Reed (2017). *Slow Art: The Experience of Looking, Sacred Images to James Turrell*. University of California Press, California p. 14.

³² Lauren Berlant (2011). *Cruel Optimism*, Duke University Press, Durham, p. 199.

³³ Byung-Chul Han (2015). *The Burnout Society*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, p. 31.

it. These misaligned times cannot be taken over by algorithms because they do not function in fixed metrics. They appear between frames, between gestures, between emotions that do not crystallise into new language, because it is precisely the fracture that makes possible a re-semantisation of the world in the sense that Ahmed described, that now “new” *in place*. In this sense, art can be a minor infrastructure of resistance, a space where deviation becomes possible. And necessary.

4.4. Between *Stimmung* and affect: the crisis of temporal alignment

In Martin Heidegger's phenomenological tradition, affective tonality (*Stimmung*) plays an essential role in the constitution of being-in-the-world. It is not an inner emotion, but a way of opening up the world as a whole. In the well-known example of anxiety (*Angst*), the world reveals itself as lacking support, as nothing: “The thing relative to which anxiety arises is totally indeterminate. This indeterminacy not only leaves it factually undecided *which* intramundane being threatens, but it also means that the intramundane being is generally not 'relevant'. The thing that causes anxiety is the very fact of *being-in-the-world*.”³⁴ This disposition does not make us feel *anything* in particular, but places us before the existential void – of finitude and being-towards-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*). In this sense, *Stimmung* is ontological: it not only colours the world, but makes it possible as a world.

Contemporary theories of affect, however, distance themselves from this ontological framework in order to explore the relational, social and political dimensions of experience. As we have seen, Brian Massumi defines affect as a pre-individual intensity, a bodily transition between states that escapes emotional codification: “a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another”³⁵. Affect does not open up a metaphysical world, but a tension of rhythms: between body and institution, between present and expectation, between feeling and responding.

Sara Ahmed³⁶, on the other hand, delves into affect as a force of (dis)alignment. Emotions, she says, are not inner experiences, but social orientations: they align us with a space, a community, a norm. But when we feel “wrong”, it is not just an emotional dysfunction, it is a crisis of positioning. Affect is not revelation, but a trigger for friction: it makes us feel out of step with the world, out of sync with the dominant rhythm.

This affective crisis of alignment is profoundly temporal. The contemporary individual no longer feels in tune with the programme, with the institutional norm, remaining in place, hesitating, delaying. If *Stimmung*

³⁴ Martin Heidegger (2003). *Ființă și timp* [Being and time], translated by Gabriel Liiceanu, Humanitas, București, pp. 252-253.

³⁵ Brian Massumi (2002), *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁶ Sara Ahmed (2004). *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

revealed an emptied world, contemporary affect signals a world that no longer fits. A world of hyperattention, reaction, affective efficiency. In this landscape, affect does not just express a rupture – it becomes this possible non-rhythm of resistance.

In an artistic context, this difference becomes palpable. Art no longer functions as ontological revelation, but as a space of affective dislocation. In works that provoke *disordered attention*, there is no longer an understanding of the world as a whole, but a loss of affective alignment, a delay in front of the image, a hesitation in front of meaning. Here, affect does not make us *understand* something, but feel that something is wrong. And from this gap, another chronology can be constructed.

Thus, a fertile rupture opens up between *Stimmung* and affect: the former reveals the world in being, the latter questions it through the body. In this sense, affect is the force that breaks the dominant chronology and prepares the ground for another politics of perception and rhythm – one that, through disordered attention, makes room for the possible.

When art makes us waste time, it offers us a rare chance: to rediscover time as a space of becoming, not as an obligation, and the artists mentioned – Mircea Suciú and Dumitru Gorzo – treat this distinction mainly pictorially, the article proposing it rather towards the viewer's own perception, as its purpose is outlined around the idea of facilitating this affective availability towards an individual imaginary understanding.

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