

Studies in Material Thinking, <http://www.materialthinking.org>
Vol. 5 (December 2011), ISSN 1177-6234, AUT University
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Volume 5 Editorial
Special Issue *(Im)materialising Time*

Taking Time

Taking time is what is at stake here. In writing this, in this taking time, would the inference here be about possession? If so, who and what is in possession of time? Or inversely, perhaps, is it time that does the taking? These series of questions are an attempt at a subtle provocation for the sake of taking care with time. The initial aim of this editorial is to suggest that these questions are off to a false start if possession is thought to operate within a schema of ownership, gain and objectivity and thereby furthering any closed-off conception of existence as rational-certainty inherited from metaphysical thought. This is not to suggest that human existence does not materialise in terms of agencies of having and not having as this would also close-off everyday circulations of experience, for instance, as manifest in our time of late-capitalism. Rather, in taking time with a concept of what in this Special Issue is themed *(Im)materialising Time*, a tentative consideration arrives around a question of what in our time possesses our imaginations where durational concerns in creative practices surface. Here we set up an overarching tenor for this issue by drawing on how in each and every moment we are taken — a taken-ness that we (the editors) correspond with attunement that discloses our temporal being. Here, now, in this very moment, this writing discloses an attunement for taking time in terms of care as that which instantiates some critical relevance for locating the significance of a question concerning (our) time. Or put more simply (and perhaps, more carefully), taking time here infers locating our relation to things in this world, including ourselves, on our *own* (everyday) terms. *Own* thereby constitutes any mood that discloses our open possible way (in time) for being. It will be according to our own everyday attunement that a temporal experience manifests (or materialises) our encounter for being-with this work.

In discussing temporal-based cinematographic imagination in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989), Gilles Deleuze conceives of a break in filmic encounter post World War Two. The epochal marker, made manifest in film, is conceived as a shift from movement to a focus on time materialised through such elements as fragmentation, isolation of image, non-chronological mapping and *ennui* in terms of showing time taken ('slow' cinema). These elements engage with an attuned

response to the affects and effects of a trauma made possible through rational-objectivity in line with technocratic instrumental desire. While attunement might seem a subjective enterprise, with duration being that subjective condition constituting our internal life, Deleuze complicates this reduction of Bergsonian thought (in *Cinema 2*), revealing that Henri Bergson increasingly came to perceive that “the only subjectivity is time ... and it is we who are internal to time, not the other way round” (1989: 82). According to Deleuze, this is the highest of paradoxical thought as time is not interior to us, rather it is the interiority in which we are: *move, live, change* ... (82). We are only temporal immersion. *(Im)materialising Time* in this vein desires a conceptual rupture for thinking the rational logic of inside/outside instrumentalism, promoting now the paradoxical ethos speculated within Deleuze’s folding frames. Time is not something possessed *through* (or *in*) us but it is *us* as folded existence, always immersed in it as the giver of our being. Mood is that disclosive way in which we are in time’s fold. In suggesting this, any bracketing out of material from immaterial existence would only provide an ease of return to the subject who possesses and knows for certain who, where, and when their border markers of identity exist. Martin Heidegger proposed, in proximity with Deleuze, that fundamental mood as attunement disclosed our ontological (temporal) difference in the world. Thrown into this or that situation or worlding (everyday) we are without certainty with attunement as our relational horizon for being.

Like the traumatic effects of WWII alluded to by Deleuze with respect to a rupture in cinema, partially arriving through a hyper-technocratic worlding, today there appears a shift in the fields of art and design with respect to creative relevance that signals (in places) a collective attunement for a slow(er) encounter with the work. The material design for a slow encounter, for instance, surfaces through “the push in recent art practice to emphasize processes and strategies of production rather than a resulting product” (*Performativity without Borders*, 2011). Further, in following through with the cinematographic imagination that expands today into fields of new media, these practices demand the viewer, spectator, participant, individual, to take time (for their being to be taken in time). In *Installing Time: Spatialised Time and Exploratory Duration*, (2009: 40-59) media theorist Katie Mondloch focuses on contemporary screen art encounters with respect to those practices that extend duration beyond stable reception. According to Mondloch, these extended works frustrate our desire for a totalised notion of comprehension that promotes meaning based on any expedient means of reciprocity. Taking time to be-with an extended durational work invites encounter based on attunement. That is, we may simply stay with the work for an indefinite time and/or return again (and again), each time editing our relations of proximity according to (our) change.

‘Not having enough time’ is a line uttered in Michael Mann’s feature-film *Heat* (1995) by Macauley (Robert De Niro) diagnosing a reoccurring dream (of drowning) as he recounts his desire for a changed-life. The psychic imagination posits a life immersed at the level of material existence without space for breath. As a grab-bag gesture, this image may simply account for an epochal shift — Are we out of breath? According to Jean Khalifa in his edited *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, the image most often used by Deleuze was that “of a breath or gust of air (*un courant d’air*). ... [And, further] a breath of air is not, properly speaking, a body, but rather a complex series of local events, affecting different masses of air and producing effects on certain bodies ... we should hear a kind of impersonal verb: ‘it breathes’ rather than a substantive” (1999: 1-2). If a current in creative practice, activated in this issue, is for process and strategy to become more materialised, heading off the fetishization of end product, is the desire here for an experience of breath as (durational) life that goes into the labour of creative production? Could this be an attempt at recovering the idea of

lost relations within the (im)materiality of life in process? If so, would this desire also point to a conundrum with respect to a valuing of the immaterial (processes/strategies) as a thing of presence, a material realisation through conditioning the contingent and fleeting as concrete evidence of our own individual or collective labour? And, further, give testimony to a drive for self-certainty, of having existed? Would this be the desiring law of passage here? This issue would want to complicate further a self in the world in terms of presence and absence, abundance and deficit, suggesting instead a turn toward process and strategy as being in the world otherwise to a fetishization of things (including the thing-ness of being as ego). Perhaps, this otherwise being materialises an economy proximate to a folded ontology close to Deleuze's enveloping (virtual and actual) plane of immanence.

Being in (this) time, folded existence expands conceptual notions of duration in terms of pace as attunement. Duration on one hand is too tightly regulated through ontic calculations of fast, medium, slow; lifetimes measured by the individual being; history known through its linear substrate to the power of ten. And, on the other hand, subjectivity immersed within the only real subjectivity as time's interiority discloses our attunement materialised as movement, aliveness and change. Ontic values will of course not cease, as we exist in this way more than any other conceptual accounting. As Walter Benjamin suggests in his essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man", all beings exist in language and not through it, thereby dismantling a means-end economy. Naming is especially interesting for its untranslatable condition suggesting a limit condition, "that a man's name is his fate" (Benjamin 1996: 69), with no differentiation between being and naming due to a temporal condition of immediacy. Our impulse now in an attempt at expanding being 'in' time 'in' language is to bring proximity to the ontic and ontological relations named here. The immersive potentiality is to think material being and immaterial being simultaneously ('in' time as the only subjectivity). In naming this our Issue opens up a discourse on how the essence of our temporal existence today is marked by practices that testify to more than one way for being — and yet, they activate temporal existence as that which inhabits multiple conditions of being in time relationally (folded).

This collection opens with *Radical Gestures: Time's Matter for Architecture* by Mark Jackson, who explores a conception of time possessed in Modernity's legacy of Enlightenment thought in relation to inherited forms of knowing architecturally. Notions of conservatism and conservation are explored for a paradoxical opening that thinks the present via Modernity's legacy for inventing the new. Through an underpinning Heideggerian fold, the paper explores a fundamental ontological attunement in our dwelling as uncanniness or unhomeliness. Here, Modernity's conception of time in architecture materialises as a temporal resistance to an open-futuring, through forgetting this fundamental (post-humanist) way of being in the world. Jackson's paper culminates around a question of ethics in thinking partially along with political philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, this crisis of the present when confronting the conservative in architecture. Like Deleuze's insight into filmic rupture signified through WWII technocracy, Jackson's paper activates Agamben's architectural figure of the camp as the paradigmatic example for thinking (a radical gesture) of ethics in relation to the urban. A material possibility that suspends the stability of autocracy (law), proximate to Deleuze's thought on virtualities (and Heidegger's uncanny) as the complication for perceiving the actualities as a static ground for knowing. Rather, within an everyday materiality the immaterial virtual gives force to an ethical future-to-come as a more open encounter to our unhomey way.

In a similar vein yet with stylistic differences the uncanny in relation to time as subjective expansiveness is explored through *Personal Objects in Institutional Places*, by Kathleen Connellan and Susan Nicols. Activating also a Deleuzian conceptual framing through the work of Elizabeth Grosz's *Time Travels*, they too, locate in architectural figures (of the School and University) notions of fixity in terms of Imperial desires for possession that account for the erasure of other concepts of history, time, people and place. Here narratives of indigenous Australians, both indigenous and white migrant South Africans, and children's worlding of a School in a transitional locale, partially gentrified suburb of Adelaide, evidence an impossibility for fixity or situatedness based on (Modernity's) institutional imperative. Through the threat and destruction of these more marginalized ways, the writers reveal the material agency of personal objects' open-possibility to speak through what may never be heard through (loss of) human voice. Immaterial remains as memory trace speak their fragility through everyday personal objects that are re-sited in adopted alien-institutional spatial worlding that bring together the ontic reality of what this paper describes as institutional time (time of conformity) and the ontological unfolding of singular most possibilities through intimate disclosure in the eclectic assemblages of personal objects in their everyday passage.

When personal accumulation in the form of objects hold place more securely in what we traditionally name as our private home, unsettling the domestic (particularly from an extended duration) can bring about a complex critique of self based on biographical material. In Melissa Laing's *In My Empty House: Ruark Lewis with Loma Bridge*, the performance work *In My Empty House* by Australian artist Ruark Lewis is discussed in light of a conceptual terrain that folds a process of emptying a family home (30 years on) in relation to theoretical ideas of Vivienne Kondos (anthropologist, owner of the home emptied and personal friend of Lewis') on time and meaning. What Laing's paper considers is how this particular work of performance engages in a contemporary condition of spatio-temporal experience activated through the complex blur of personal relations translated (or transposed) through an array of scriptural, sonic, spatial, scopic and (multi-)sensual *performatives* of communication. These material elements act as agency of transcription producing multiple accounts of relations folded in the time of an intensified locale (as home) — severed abruptly from 'origin', an ongoing process of self-as-shifting-process rather than fixed by notions of ownership is activated. Laing brings into focus the multiple generative conditions operating at the level of structures and systems of long-durational ties to place and the values of emptying (in an attempt to erase otherness) that fold back to what Jackson's paper refers to as 'conserving the present'.

Folds of Time by Dagmar Reinhardt activates a similar concern for latent undeterminable future in durational characteristics of space described by Elizabeth Grosz as *loci of intensity, compression and elasticity*. While Grosz's analysis is one of architecture, Reinhardt expands this thinking to the creative practice of fashion design. Further, the impulse here is to broaden the horizontal thought for architecture when latent durational forces are explored in fashion. Ultimately, the paper initiates in the spirit of fashion as a fleeting, fluid and ephemeral phenomenon, a desire for unstable paradigms in architectural thought and practices. Suggestions of such a shift in architecture is acknowledged here, although more is on offer in terms of fashion design methods that reveal the abundance of processes materialising our unfettered drive to keep experimenting as the archive, storage or latency for being establishes. Latency is that overarching durational tenor that marks our desire for creativity *per se*.

Common to contemporary art and design practices is a preoccupation with the scopic as that hierarchical logic in need of deconstruction for the emancipation of

a more sensory vivification in the acknowledgement of embodied thought. *Transient Materiality* by Ross McLeod shifts this focus around to a more affirmative potentiality of the scopic in relation to an aesthetics of refractural possibilities, (im)materialisable through the material skin of urban space in a play of light (latent in the architectural precedence of Modernism). In opening up this playful discourse for urban imagination (architecture and dwellers together), McLeod discusses the optical light installation *Transcience of Light*. He discusses it in terms of an enticement for movement through the viewer's encounter. It is the viewer who becomes the work activating in their playful reciprocity a hapticity built on (im)materialising aesthetic affect via scopic evocation. Further, in the latent economy (similar to Reinhardt's text) this work invites experimentation without commanding the viewer how to act — an invitation encouraging the taking of (one's) time that enables an agency of reciprocity through intuitive wonder.

Practicing artist Rachel Shearer also explores site's performative qualities through her site-specific sound installation practice drawing on two public urban sound projects. Both sited in Tamaki Makarau/Auckland and commissioned by Auckland Council the works encourage materialisation of the local sound-scape through sonic translation of place as acoustic accretion with a subtle political agency. If place is known to us through dominant registers of thought —(say for instance in the field of arts, the visual over the sonic, or notions of place as a possessive ideal, i.e., we here refer back to the papers' of Jackson, Laing, Connellan and Nicols)— then Shearer's practice activates a radical gesturing toward what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'geophilosophical' stratum of thought. Place in terms of territoriality is complicated here as shifting networks are open for activation *anytime*. As Shearer suggests in her abstract, "*Whakapapa* is engaged here to deepen and nuance an understanding of geophilosophy, one that aims to better understand the complex forces of binding cultures to place". Chant is taken as her key structural register for a *territorialisation* of space through acoustic imagination. If like the attunement of Deleuze and Guattari's thought on becoming-imperceptible as that proximate condition of self and other, perhaps, it is chant that offers us an experience of Shearer's acoustic spatial-temporal fold, which conditions vivification as an extended-duration that becomes too immense for measure.

In taking some time to unfold and refold a conceptual horizon for (im)materialising time, this Special Issue (Vol. 5 of *Studies in Material Thinking Journal*) manifests an ongoing activity for questioning through working alongside the above series of contributions as thought-becoming-materialised through the more concrete markers of different creative practices, processes and strategies in the being named artist, designer, writer, scholar, teacher, learner, thinker If practices today frustrate our desire for wholly conceived experiences of the world, then we suggest here that attention has shifted to creative processes of becoming where subjective perception is multiple, contingent and divergent at the most simplest level of the everyday.

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