Many have argued that since postmodernism, the visual arts and cultural productions in general have entered a state of simultaneousness. A state, in which its production is obviously repeating itself in always tighter sequences, leading towards an infinite now with historical amnesia.

Several socio-political events throughout the 20. Century can be seen as entering points into a state of contemporaneity, a shift from which I would say that perception of a singular present got split into multiple presents. It is exactly this state, the state of multiplicity that is mirrored within the cultural production and in the visual arts, summarized under the name of contemporary art.

Through those multiple presents, the relation to a clear present gets lost and with it also a reference to a single historical narration on which speculative future prediction through an evaluation of historically progressed experiences could rely on. Within this state of contemporaneity, history appears no longer as something pre-given, but rather is able to alter, according to the demands of its meaning for the present and the future. According to the diversity of demands that are put towards historical pasts, multiple presents as well as multiple speculative future perspectives coexist in a collective consciousness next to each other. This I would say, results in a displacement, a dispersal of an actual experienced now and according to Rebentisch, because of those presents “... sometimes untimely engagement with the past might bring us back to a present that we have not yet been in.”¹

With no clear present, that references a historical narration to rely on, it becomes rather difficult to engage with any speculative future perspectives, because it leads to repetitive loops of always newly emerging presents. Those loops increasingly tighten up, trapping those simultaneously existing presents in an eternal process of repetition. With no clear references for progression, those repetitive presents are somehow doomed to fail, in the sense that they are leading to nowhere but towards a meaningless white-out space. It clearly marks an end to a chronological historical timeline and describes a dynamic state of normality, in which canonicity is always under debate. Or how Terry Smith puts it;

“The only potentiality permanent thing about this state of affairs is that it may last for an unspecifiable amount of time: the present may become perversely, “eternal”.”²

This state of contemporaneity is not a construct that only concerns time. Through the inseparable intersection of time and space, I would argue, that the constitution of infinite presents also creates an infinitely open space. This increasing space plays a crucial role for the perception of oneself within a contemporary present:

“The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. [...] our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time, than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.”

Therefore I see the first of January as an important date that plays a crucial role in the awareness of history, as well as in the situating of oneself within a present of a spatial context. It is the first of January 1950, to which the short term BP – before present or before physics refers. Due to too many nuclear weapon tests and other nuclear waste that has polluted the earth’s atmosphere, the scientific community has to admit that the methods of radiocarbon dating is from this date on no longer accurate anymore. In general, this means, that any excavations that are made in the future can’t date with accuracy things younger than 1950. From a future point, everything from 1950 on belongs to some sort of a simultaneous time-mass, that reaches from 1950 until the date in the future where the radiocarbon measure will take place. This date is of special interest because it bears scientific empirical evidence and therefore claiming a "truth" that does not depend on whatever point of view is taken on the time measurement or social development. Fact is, that from there on, humanity has reached a state of contemporaneity which is no longer just a Zeitgeist phenomenon, but rather a condition of how we will perceive our environment space from a single future perspective.

In this contemporary state, the visual arts is in danger of making use of the same symbols and metaphorical references that have been used throughout all kinds of art-historical developments over and over again, without questioning the signified and the meaning of those repeated metaphorical references themself. In order to maintain validity in all sorts of different present, historical timelines as well as speculative futures, contemporary art uses an almost infinite palette of possible constellation of juxtapositions, as well as space and time concerning relations through metaphorical references. Whilst these interconnections with an

---


infinite possible validity in the present aim to create meaningful reasons, the metaphorical references and symbolic mediation used always remain the same.

This condition tends towards an uncritical use of representational systems and this creates stagnation in innovation and a continuation of a predetermined structure. The only possibility I see to achieve progression however, is to break with those repetitive looping presents and the aim of veracity to an infinite timeline, to open possibilities to question the metaphor and the predetermined system itself and allow new interpretations, new meanings.

I wonder however, how to give something the ability to always be capable of new interpretation, disconnected from any metaphorical connotation. Something, that allows the metaphorical content of a symbol to leak. That means, this particular work has always to be under a constant circumstances of dialectic, a condition of a constant debate and adaptable to interpretations. A circumstance of contemporaneity however, hinders this act in certain ways, through this simultaneous experience of history, present and future, everything has at any time accuracy. What is lacking in the condition of contemporaneity is an agreed Now, from which one could dialectically interpret symbols anew. Like Walter Benjamin puts it;

"Every Now is determined by those images that are synchronic with it: every Now is the Now of a specific recognisability (das Jetzt einer bestimmten Erkennbarkeit). In it, truth is loaded to the bursting point with time. (This bursting point is nothing other than the death of the intention, which accordingly coincides with the birth authentic historical time the time of truth)."\(^5\)

This means that, to reach a point of intentionlessness (in the sense of the metaphorical intentionlessness), there needs to be an authentic historical time, a linear time with a single Now, in which one is able to load truth, through the recognisability of the specific Now. To recognize an image in its intenionlessness, it needs to be in a standstill, a standstill that can only be provided through a recognisability of the specific Now. And only if the image is read from the Now its metaphorical meaning becomes transparent, it becomes truly dialectical and disconnected with all predetermined connotations.

"The image that is read, that is, the image at the Now of recognisability, bears to the highest degree the stamp of critical, dangerous impetus that lies at the source of all reading."\(^6\)

This leads to the question of how one could experience this mentioned recognisability of this specific now, and within all those multiple presents, where this Now is to be found? I would


\(^{6}\) Smith, Gary, 50 [N3,1].
argue that this is only to be achieved through the personal inner, through a true intuitive attempt of understanding the Now. That means the only recognizable now is the now that can be experienced through once inner. This also might describe a better way of how to bypass the analysing of predetermined symbols and reinterpret from anew, - through pure experience and an intuitive encounter towards the given.

“…an absolute could only be given in an intuition whilst everything else falls within the province of analysis. By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy, by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.”

The assimilation with a now in a contemporary scenario of multiple possible presents is, as previously described, hindered by the condition of the contemporaneity itself. This denying of the assimilation of a now that would enable one to recognize a "real" present through the experienced inner, is leading through its repetitions to a stagnation in the progression of historical time as well as an actual involvement of an environmental space. Through an unavoidable event in a foreseeable future, I would argue, a collective intuitive inner is simultaneously addressed that arguably will have an impact on how the present will be perceived. This foreseeable event, I would say is to be found under the mantel of the monstrosity - an unimaginable tragedy. An event that affects every one on a same level, like for example the effects of climate change on the planet. This collective perception and anticipation of the inexpressible occurs in the contingency of the possible impossible, the decay of an environmental structure and leading therefore to a premonition of ones own nonexistence. It is exactly at this point, I would argue, when ones inner intuition is addressed which evolves into a same collective experience of a now. As previously explained, this realization of a “true” now can only be achieved through an intellectual sympathetic dispute with the inexpressible, an inexpressible that can be found in the confrontation and the recognition of oneself in relation to the nothingness.

---


9 The term „nothingness“ is strongly connotes with Heideggerian phenomenology in which its context has been altered and debated through time and has taken on different connotations. In this text however the notion of “nothingness” is only used in relation of ones awareness towards ones own nothingness of existence – the confrontation with ones end of being.
Bibliography:


List of Images used in the thesis but not cited in the summary:

1. & 2. Brunner, Andreas. – “As far as I know”, 2016.
1. As far as I know, 2016
Installation view of the seven transport boxes.

2. To sieve - part of As far as I know, 2016
Example for the content of a transport box.
Core sample & cultural history books.
4. Things I kept from vanishing, 2017

Sculture

5. Things I kept from vanishing, 2017

The unfolding of the box - The inside of the symbol.
8. Alter, 2016
Installation view of the "rubbing hand - layering / coding".

Screen shot of the video "rubbing hand - layering / coding".
10. Alter, 2016
Installation view of the "throwing hand - layering / coding".

11. Alter, 2016
Screen shot of the video "throwing hand - layering coding".
12. Contrapposto, 2017
Installation view of the video „imprinting“.

13. Contrapposto, 2017
Screen shot of the video „imprinting“.
13. Contrapposto, 2017
Installation view of the video "contemplation."

13. Contrapposto, 2017
Screen shot of the video "contemplation."
16. Untitled, 2017
Screen shot of the video “failed attempt of reaching out / disembodiment”

17. Untitled, 2017
Screen shot of the video “failed attempt of reaching out / disembodiment”