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In the Rhythm of Time: Aesthetic and Creative Processes in Focus

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Aesthetic practice

How is waiting perceived as a conscious, aesthetic practice? What parallels are there between waiting and the creative process of making?

Waiting is a fundamental human experience that unfolds different meanings in different cultural and artistic contexts. The question of how waiting can be perceived as a conscious, aesthetic practice opens up perspectives on the connection between temporal experience and creative design. It is possible to examine the extent to which waiting can be understood as a reflected state that, like the creative process, encompasses phases of expectation, uncertainty and transformation. Both waiting and art production require patience, openness to the unexpected and the ability to use uncertainty productively. In this context, the challenge arises not only to view waiting situations as passive moments, but to actively integrate them into artistic or aesthetic processes. Waiting can be perceived as a conscious, aesthetic practice that invites reflection and creativity and runs parallel to the creative process itself. As Yoo suggests, waiting can be transformed from a mechanical, purposeless state into a living experience that is of intrinsic value and allows the individual to experience the richness of waiting (Yoo, 2022). This notion is in line with Martin-Mattera's discussion of anticipation as a crucial element of creation, where the act of waiting fosters a dynamic interplay between desire and reality, ultimately leading to new creative insights (Martin-Mattera, 2013). This corresponds to the concept of anticipation in the creative process, where waiting becomes a space for potential and the emergence of new ideas, as discussed by Patrick Martin-Mattera. Farman further contextualizes waiting within societal frameworks, highlighting how it disrupts conventional narratives of productivity and thus can enable a deeper engagement with time and existence (Farman, 2018). Matchett and Okech's poetry illustrates the emotional weight of waiting and emphasizes its role in social and personal contexts, which can inspire artistic expression and collaborative reflection (Matchett & Okech, 2015). The concept of waiting is explored here as a liminal space, further emphasizing its role in coping with uncertainty and fostering hope for change. Taken together, these perspectives emphasize waiting as fertile ground for creativity, where anticipation and reflection meet to enrich the human experience. The 'in-between time' is also seen as a time of possibility, where waiting allows for the coexistence of calculation and uncertainty, and the emergence of new social and material contexts. (In the Meantime, 2023).

Conscious experience of time - architecture and cultural understanding

How do different cultures design spaces in which time is consciously experienced? Can architecture promote empathy and cultural understanding?

The question of how different cultural imprints or religious traditions influence waiting times can be investigated by examining differently designed bus shelters and stops and thus illustrate different ways of experiencing time and social behavior. In Catholic regions, bus shelters are often richly decorated and reminiscent of chapels, creating an atmosphere that favors passive, comfortable waiting. This architecture reflects the Catholic focus on a sensual, edifying experience (Edelmann, 2014). This contrasts with the often sparse and functional bus shelters and stops in Protestant areas, which tend to encourage active and purposeful waiting. This reduction to the essentials can be seen as analogous to Protestant sacred architecture, which deliberately dispenses with decoration and imagery (Seibold, 1996).

Architecture can therefore be seen as a medium that promotes cultural understanding by making deeply rooted social and religious values visible. The comparison of Catholic and Protestant waiting houses shows how spaces can shape different expectations and behaviors with regard to waiting through their design.

Cultural differences in spatial organization significantly influence how people perceive and experience time, as various studies in different cultural contexts have shown. In non-Western cultures, time is often experienced as social and relational, which contrasts with the linear and segmented perception of time (Taylor, 2016) that is prevalent in Western cultures and often leads to tensions with conventional time interfaces such as clocks and calendars. For example, the Pormpuraawans, an Australian Aboriginal community, conceptualize time along cardinal directions, such as east to west, rather than relative to the body, which is a unique spatial representation of time (Boroditsky & Gaby, 2010). This is in contrast to Western cultures, which typically visualize time on a horizontal axis, with the past on the left and the future on the right. Furthermore, spatial schemas used to represent time, such as vertical and horizontal axes, can vary considerably, with the horizontal schema often representing the perspective that moves the ego, while the vertical schema embodies both ego-moving and time-moving perspectives. Furthermore, linguistic and gestural data show that some cultures use spatial metaphors for time, while others rely on

absolute spatial references, such as the aforementioned east-west axis in Australian Aboriginal languages, which differ from the body-based axes used in many other cultures (Fuente, 2014; Sullivan, 2016). These cultural differences in spatial design and perceptions of time highlight the profound influence of cultural context on the way time is experienced and conceptualized around the world.

In this context, architecture can be understood as a medium that promotes empathy and cultural understanding. By creating spaces that represent specific values and attitudes, architecture enables different perspectives on time and community. Bus shelters are an apt example of how even seemingly mundane functional buildings can become places where cultural identity is expressed and shared. They are not only functional, but also symbolically significant, as they materialize cultural notions of time and space and make them tangible for the individual.

Aesthetic interpretation of images - waiting

What images and symbols do we associate with waiting? How can these be aesthetically interpreted or questioned?

Images and symbols associated with waiting are diverse and culturally rich, reflecting both historical and contemporary frames of reference. In popular American visual culture from 1870 to 1930, waiting was often depicted through queues and scenes of migration, poverty and unemployment, and usually occurred in consumer-oriented spaces such as train stations and department stores (Clark, 2022). In a more poetic and socio-political context, waiting is symbolized by the expectation of social change and personal justice, which can be seen in the imagery of promised homes, political promises or the longing for security and equality in communities. The concept of waiting as a temporal space of possibility, where uncertainty and expectation coexist, illustrates a neoliberal view of time as a purely productive resource (In the Meantime, 2023; Farman, 2018). In literature, plays such as “Waiting for Godot” and “Waiting for Lefty” use waiting as a metaphor for existential and social issues, each with their own cultural interpretations (Luhua, 2015). These diverse representations emphasize waiting as a multifaceted symbol that is rich in aesthetic and interpretative potential in different media and contexts.

Power and social structures: waiting as social commentary

How can students use art to question social dynamics and power structures that are evident in seemingly everyday situations such as waiting?

By incorporating art into political theory and social justice education, students are encouraged to think differently about their world and use art to challenge assumptions and beliefs about social groups, power and privilege (Silva, 2012). Furthermore, contemporary art projects that address identity, diversity and social justice can engage students in a discourse that critically engages with these aspects (Song, 2022). By creating artistic environments that address social justice issues, students learn to understand art as a communicative act that brings social inequalities into focus and thus inspires reflection and action (Tremblay, 2013; Sakamoto, 2014). Visual critical pedagogy also empowers students to become agents of social knowledge and change (Gil-Glazer, 2021). Art education functions here as a tool that questions and reflects on the complexity

of social dynamics and power structures in everyday life (Garber & Costantino, 2007).

Various aspects of power, powerlessness and social structures can be seen in connection with waiting situations. Waiting is often used as a means of power to demonstrate hierarchies or to illustrate the powerlessness of other people. In a military context, for example, waiting is associated with physical subjugation, such as the “guard position”, which forces those waiting into a physical torpor and illustrates the power of the person making them wait (Edelmann, 2014).

A striking historical example is the walk to Canossa in 1077, when Pope Gregory VII humiliated King Henry IV by making him wait barefoot and in penitential robe for several days before releasing him from his ecclesiastical ban. This deliberate delay served to demonstrate power and dramatically portrayed the powerlessness of the person waiting (Edelmann, 2014). Waiting situations in modern contexts, such as in queues or in the healthcare system, reveal social inequalities. Here, there is a multi-class system of waiting based on financial or social privileges. People with higher status wait shorter or under more comfortable conditions, for example in VIP areas or lounges. These differences are often visible and reinforce existing social hierarchies (Edelmann, 2014). These observations offer valuable starting points for art projects in which students can stage, document or artistically redesign waiting situations in order to make the mechanisms of power and powerlessness in everyday situations visible (Klingemann, 2015).

Societal changes

How do technological and societal changes influence our perception of time and space?

Technological and social changes have profoundly affected our perception of time and space and changed the way individuals and societies interact with their environment. Historically, advances in transportation and communication, such as the railroad and telegraph, have reduced spatial distances and standardized time, allowing previously remote regions to be integrated into broader economic and social networks (Crawford, 2022). This compression of space and time has been reinforced by modern technologies, leading to an increasingly fleeting and superficial perception of time (Burgese et al. 2017). Neurophysiological aspects of spatial-temporal perception also play a role. They affect behavioral regulation and impulse control, which are crucial for understanding social interactions (McCaffree, 2024). Human geographers are exploring the different perceptions of objective and lived time in the context of mobility and advancing technology in relation to interpersonal experiences and perceptions (Ellegård, 2024). In the field of human-computer interaction, new concepts of time such as digital and plastic time are emerging, challenging the traditional representation and understanding of time (Yildiz & Coşkun, 2020). Social practices and physical conditions further influence spatial experiences, with technological advances often exacerbating spatial inequities and changing cultural norms (Shaw & Shaw, 2016). Immigrants, for example, experience changes in the perception of time and space when they (have to) adapt to new cultural environments. They often feel a loss of stability and a reorientation towards their past (Yelenevskaya & Fialkova, 2015). Especially in urban environments, spatial perception has changed due to the densification of buildings, information flows and other technologies, leading to new identities and uses of space (Salvadeo, 2020). The

introduction of different coordinate spaces for different purposes reflects the complexity of spatial perception, which is influenced by both physical and technological factors (Parkin, 2016).

Artistic interventions

How can waiting situations be transformed through art to open up new perspectives on time, community and space?

Art can transform waiting situations by reconfiguring perceptions of time, community and space and offering new perspectives and experiences. The institutional analysis of waiting, as proposed by Avila Castellanos, suggests understanding waiting beyond its temporal dimension to include social and cultural factors (Castellanos, 2023a; 2023b). This redefinition is in line with the concept of a “pedagogy of waiting”, which questions normative time patterns and takes physical differences into account. Art installations such as Julian Hetzel's “Still - The Economy of Waiting” criticize traditional models of productivity by transforming waiting into an occupation, thus creating a counter-model to capitalist time structures (Calzado, 2019). After the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, creative projects transformed vacant spaces into spaces that encourage people to linger and offer a pleasant experience of waiting (Carter, 2023). The spatial configuration of waiting environments can also influence temporal perception. Symbols consisting of bars and rings, for example, influence how time is perceived during longer waiting times (Zhao et al., 2023). In addition, the use of olfactory elements, such as lavender or orange scents, can improve the waiting experience (Vilaplana & Yamanaka, 2014). These different approaches show the potential of artistic interventions in waiting situations to stimulate a deeper engagement with time, community and space.

The central starting point for artistic interventions is the concept of “designed waiting” (Edelmann, 2014), which aims to use aesthetic interventions to mitigate the negative effects of waiting, such as stress or frustration, while at the same time shaping the waiting time as a conscious, positive experience. One example of this is the integration of comfortable seating and entertainment media to not only make the waiting time more bearable, but also to use it as an opportunity for relaxation and reflection. The deliberate design of waiting areas can create a sense of community, especially if these spaces encourage encounters and enable social interaction. These approaches lend themselves to artistic projects in which students can redesign waiting situations. For example, installations or temporary artworks could be developed that turn waiting areas into inspiring places that encourage reflection on time, patience and social dynamics. Such projects show how art not only questions existing structures, but can also actively contribute to rethinking public space and provide valuable impulses for dealing with time and space.

Waiting as a theme or experience of time in contemporary art offers a variety of approaches to reflecting on patience, boredom and expectation in modern society. One example of the artistic treatment of the subject is performative practice, in which the act of waiting takes center stage. The artist Marina Abramović thematizes waiting as a performative act. This form of designed waiting shows how patience and perseverance can be transformed into a creative process that involves both those waiting and those observing (Hübl, 2000).

Waiting situations are often characterized by uncertainty and powerlessness, which leads to a primarily negative image of waiting in modern society. These negative connotations can be transformed

through artistic interventions. Examples from contemporary art, such as performative elements or spatial installations, illustrate that waiting situations can be used to open up new perspectives on the meaning of time and expectation. Art thus offers the opportunity to understand waiting not just as an annoying interruption, but as a conscious, aesthetic practice. This opens up new ways of thinking about the role of time and space in social contexts.

Film analysis as a didactic tool

Analyzing films with slow narrative structures offers a valuable didactic tool for teaching students the concepts of suspense, expectation and perception. Alfred Hitchcock, known as the master of suspense, deliberately used slow narrative structures in his films to heighten audience anticipation. This approach allows educators to use the unique abilities of film to train comprehension and critical thinking skills. For example, the use of films in education has been shown to improve students' cognitive and critical thinking skills, as well as their concentration and recall, by providing an engaging experience that combines theoretical concepts with real-life representations (Kebaya & Mokaya, 2023). Hitchcock, for example, uses long takes and a subtle build-up of scenes to place viewers in an atmosphere of waiting before the suspense is resolved. By specifically observing such cinematic techniques, students can learn how visual and narrative devices are used to create tension and direct emotions. A central aspect of film analysis is reflecting on the perception of time in films. Compared to more modern (digital) media, which often rely on fast cuts and dynamic narrative styles, slower films allow a more intensive examination of the details and emotional content of the plot. Students can learn how the medium of film plays with time to convey certain messages or draw attention to otherwise inconspicuous aspects. These slower narrative structures can be analyzed in class to illustrate the complex process of building tension and time sequence. Examining still images and slow motion can help students move beyond a basic understanding of plot to more complex interpretations of cinematic relationships and textures, improving their analytical skills (Finch, 2013).

All you need is just a little patience

Patience, or *patientia*, has always been seen as a virtue and has played a central role in human culture and philosophy over the centuries. Patience is described as the ability to passively and calmly accept the passage of time and processes. It was regarded as one of the main virtues in ancient philosophy, particularly by the Athenian philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and was referred to as *sophrosyne* (prudent composure). Patience found its way into Christian ethics via the Roman world, where it was integrated into the Christian-chivalric catalog of virtues as *patientia*. In this context, patience was described, particularly in medieval Christian ethics, as the ability to regulate anger and to elevate waiting to a form of spiritual and emotional discipline. It is interesting to note that patience as a virtue has retained its importance not only in religious but also in economic contexts. While in pre-modern times it was closely associated with spiritual expectations such as advent or salvation, in capitalism it gained a new function as the ability to pursue long-term goals and maximize profits through perseverance (Edelmann, 2014).

Patience is a fundamental virtue in all cultures, helping people to overcome both personal and societal challenges. This makes it clear that *patientia* has not only an individual, but also a social and cultural dimension that takes on different meanings in different contexts.

The intersection of patience and art didactics opens up important insights into both the pedagogical and socio-political dimensions of art. In performance art, patience is linked to the concepts of care and social reproduction, particularly in feminist contexts where it highlights the burdens of unpaid labor that women disproportionately bear under capitalism (Antoniadou, 2023). This tension shows how patience is not only a personal virtue, but also a socially and artistically significant force. Patience plays an equally central role in the artistic creative process. Art is often a process of waiting: for inspiration, for the drying process of materials or for the completion of a work. Making students aware of this waiting as part of the artistic process enables them to understand patience as a creative force. They learn that perseverance and the ability to endure a phase of uncertainty often lead to the best results. Patience in the artistic process is therefore not only understood as a practical skill, but also as an element that is deeply rooted in art history. A look at art history shows how patience has always been associated with art and reflection. It is a recurring theme in art history and art education. Religious art, such as icon painting or medieval manuscripts, requires and symbolizes patience as a spiritual virtue. In contemporary art, artists such as Marina Abramović (*The Artist Is Present*) address patience as a performative practice by consciously integrating perseverance or waiting as part of the artwork. This historical and contemporary reference illustrates how patience can also be taught as a central value in art lessons. The link between patience and art didactic principles provides a basis for deeper learning experiences. The basic idea of patience in the sense of positively connoted perseverance offers valuable starting points in art didactics for dealing with time, processual sequences and general reflection in artistic creation. In art, patience is often understood not only as a virtue, but also as an essential component of creative processes that teaches students to focus on long-term goals, careful observation and perseverance in difficult phases.

Incorporating patience into art didactics opens up valuable learning opportunities for students that go beyond the creative process. It promotes the development of resilience and perseverance by teaching students to patiently and consistently engage with artistic tasks. At the same time, they are encouraged to appreciate slow processes and focus their attention on details, which strengthens their perceptiveness and concentration. Patience also helps them to see time as a resource that can be used productively. Finally, reflecting on their own creative process and dealing with uncertainty enables them to develop critical thinking in order to be able to tackle creative challenges more consciously.

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