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Time and the Work

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The starting point of this issue is the conviction that the artwork has been one of the most important sites for speculation on the concept of time, from systematic German aesthetics to contemporary visual and cultural studies. The multiple critiques within the theoretical fields of the past century can be said to center around a re-evaluation of the concept of temporality, from Nietzsche's exaltation of Dionysian thought, to Bergson's analysis of duration, Heidegger's challenge to metaphysics, and Derrida's notion of *différance*. The contemporary theory that has been the legacy of these critiques has continued to assert the fundamental importance of the interlacing of time and the artwork to the re-evaluation of thought. On one hand the work of art has been conceived as the arrest of time, of time frozen and possessed, and on the other as the vehicle itself of becoming, expressing a form of knowledge that exceeds the limits of systematic, linear thought. This issue does not seek to take a unified position on the question of the artwork's relation to temporality, but rather to explore its stakes, questions and possible paths.

Andrei Molotiu's essay, "Focillon's Bergsonian Rhetoric and the Possibility of Deconstruction," questions the manner in which deconstruction has thus far been imported into art history and calls for a

reevaluation of the thought of Jacques Derrida. Mainly what he questions is the assumption that deconstruction is opposed to formalist approaches to the work, and that it supports the recent trend to understand the art work *wholly* as a socio-political, historical phenomenon. Molotiu makes his argument by reflecting on the similarities between two seemingly incompatible thinkers: Jacques Derrida and art historian Henri Focillon. Molotiu argues that while the new art historians dismiss Focillon as a traditional formalist, Focillon's close phenomenological analysis of the encounter with a singular and ultimately unpossessable work is derived from the same intellectual tradition that supports Derrida's critique of presence and closure -- namely the Bergsonian philosophy of time. Molotiu uses the writings of these three thinkers to make his overarching argument -- that to reduce the work wholly to the sum of its historical and social context is to enter into a closed, deterministic notion of time which delivers no future, no freedom, no possibility of transformation, and ultimately no singular event.

Amy Herzog essay, "Images of Thought and Acts of Creation: Deleuze, Bergson, and the Question of Cinema," contemplates the significance of Deleuze's work on cinema for the field of film theory. She begins by questioning how we are to understand the relation between Bergsonian theories of time, which are deeply rooted in philosophies of life and creation, with a seemingly stable and fixed aesthetic object such as a film. Herzog describes how Bergson used the cinema to illustrate the static functioning of intellect, as opposed to intuition or duration, and she argues that the apparent contradiction between Deleuze's and Bergson's use of the medium of film is resolved "if we view film not as a model for perception, nor a reflected image of reality, but as a unique image with its own duration." Herzog points out that what Deleuze offers then is a complete re-evaluation of the concept of representation and the role and meaning of the activity of the work of art. Herzog follows several lines of questioning through Deleuze in order to open up the larger question of the relation between life and the art work, and specifically what it means to engage with the "objects" of visual culture.

D.N. Rodowick's essay, "Unthinkable Sex: Conceptual Personae and the Time-Image," takes Deleuze's work in a new direction by using the concept of conceptual personae to think through the problem of gender. While

Deleuze situates conceptual personae as *philosophical* figures, Rodowick asks whether conceptual personae can be present in film. Rodowick lays out the mysterious terrain of the conceptual personae by describing the manner in which such personae are situated between multiple points of enunciation, serving to introduce the heterogeneity of a free indirect relation that divides from within. Rodowick proposes three exemplary *auteurs*: Godard, Agnes Varda, and Chantal Akerman, in order to articulate the prevailing question of his essay : "Can an ethics of sexual difference be sustained by the time-image and in the other arts? How can one create new values concerning 'gender' expressed as 'heteronyms' -- positions of subjectivity or enunciation-- that elude the binary logic of sexual opposition (masculine/feminine, hetero/homosexuality)?"

Lori Wike's essay, "Photographs and Signatures: Absence, Presence and Temporality in Barthes and Derrida," stages an imaginary dialogue between Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, taking on what would seem to be a fundamental conflict between the claims of Barthes in *Camera Lucida* for the persistence and presence of the Referent in photography, and the claims made by Derrida in "Signature, Event, Context" regarding the structural iterability of writing. Wike seeks in her analysis to deny such a conflict by focusing on the intersections of these two positions and she seeks to elucidate this intersection through the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis. One of the most important points of intersection is the figure of death and the unique temporality it occupies in relation to both the photograph and the signature.

William V. Ganis' essay, "Andy Warhol's Iconophilia" explores some of the temporal implications of Andy Warhol's media self-reflexivity by juxtaposing Warhol's serial art with the Nietzschean eternal recurrence and the Deleuzean conception of time. His claim is that Warhol's serial work is the "unpresentable presentation" of infinite image repetition. This infinite repetition extends not only beyond the frame towards other Warhol works, but also into the world and into the field of art history itself. Ganis makes his argument concerning the art historical paradoxes of originality and recurrence by focusing on Warhol's "ritual obeisance to simulacra's worshipped ancestors" in art history, images taken from such figures as Leonard da Vinci, Giorgio de Chirico, and Edvard Munch.

The writers who have contributed to this issue have done so from a variety of different critical engagements, working with an assortment of media including painting, prints, cinema, photography and writing. The questions raised, however, in each of these pieces seek to not only delineate the specificity of a particular cultural object, but more broadly to situate these mediums within the larger question of the relation between art and being. This ground on which existence, time, figure, and thought intersect is the site of our issue.



[Return to Table of Contents](#)