

Time of Justice Sybrandt van Keulen (University of Amsterdam)

Political time, the time of regimes and elections, is short: 'a week is a long time in politics'. Economic time, sociological time, so to speak, has a longer *durée*. Cultural time is even slower, more glacial.

Stuart Hall

In such a temporality, the act of theory is the process of articulation.

Homi K. Bhabha

The future is replaced by a sense of urgency that torments her.

Annie Ernaux

In less than a week, less than a day, if any calculation is applicable, probably the blind spot of a metaphysics of presence: in no time justice can be done. Inflecting time in either past, future or present tense doesn't make the 'now' of justice measurable. Yet a just 'now' makes things seen and heard that a moment before seemed impossible. Not in terms of exclusive principles (just or unjust, rational or factual), but in terms of the very texture of vulnerable things produced, call them works of art, things that occur. That would be my thesis for this split moment, Annie Ernaux decided to write it down just like that, speaking of "her sense of urgency", inside-out frames of place and time, not beyond them, absolutely cracking them, even striking "the very roots of all politics" (Arendt), just enough in order to be able to be recognized as art (fragile, illusive, forgettable facts) yet at the same time: effects of heterogeneous techniques that effectuate chances and in a way torment algorithmic power. Her works are in this sense effective: condensed requests for justice. The enticing heterogenous tricks should include *l'abîme* and laughter of course: opening up 'now' as future *in situ*, *de Saint Phalle*, because an event or happening of transformation needs transformation once more: of monopolies of violence — the clause of Clausewitz hides a *Witz*: the means of art. Since art requires *a certain enforcing*, it longs to split the inside-outside of "the political realm proper" (Arendt), to undo effects of non-man-made logics of institutional truth, apparatuses engined by ascetic logics: to rule out, redeem. Art cannot be non-violent, but its determinative striking yet mild coercive force attacks not in opposing the negating power vested in the heart of legislative and legal systems in general (art systems in particular). Just art, right on the spot, hits in the making: invents places, turning faces, to face just her interests. Creating untimely crates, cravings, lust for the just, fictitious and real. The attitude needed for such 'things' may be called evenementality or eventiveness, a gut feeling for *un coup* or two (*de dés, d'état*), an exception in every meaning of the word, close shave, dare to dare, parrhesia — please don't 'control', 'police', 'race', 'sex' her urgency. No future or past and just in the meantime. Perhaps

pedestrian art. A funny “sense of direction and reality” (Arendt), for a change. She hesitates to think in terms of process (Bhabha), because it seems too calculated to be true, too much of a project (perhaps not secret enough) yet if the expression “articulation” does mean *spatial*, the pressure of hesitation, divesting effects of delay, clearing (*Lichtung*), the possible effectuated time for attention (*Andacht*), deliberation, speculation, experimentation, improvisation, “articulation” could probably enhance the sense of the necessity of postponing decision-making to *The Here and After*, Jun Miyake, *Pina*, Lisa Papineau: “a moment broken”. It’s not about phenomena here and over there, actually ‘now’ doesn’t happen just in time, belated momentum. Becoming ‘now’ seems a contradiction in terms. Anyway hard to think, even harder to do. She requires indeed a certain know-how to enhance swinging elliptical configurations (Foucault), to ‘manufacture’ singular relations hazardously preparing non-centered happenings. To be able to do and let happen something else, ‘something’ in-out-stalling the system, it’s a thing she — no one — did ever ask for; just like that; but at least this is what she knows: algorithms don’t yearn, don’t question, pray or request, but command, order, push, instruct, calculate — coming soon: justice on demand — as if they know how to decide about your life. Quasi a priori. Intimidating anyway. Remember titles that read as advertisements of feature films of the apocalyptic genre: ‘the end of organized capitalism’ (John Urry), ‘the decline of the nation state’ (David Held), some time before global companies, tycoons, appear algorithmically, as glamorously operating phalluses playing trump cards, over-pressuring national consent everywhere. Basically human all too human, clearly recognizable, sometimes even tangible yet untouchable, absolutely unweilable “mathematical truth” (Hobbes, Arendt). How to create foils, just as untouchable, requests, aching questions, “scars and traces” (Stuart Hall) transformed into pleasure attacks? From where? Situated at the other end of intemporality (the violent timelessness of the mathematical state), from deep down under, *unzeitgemäß khôra*: ‘now’ creating in-between spaces, in-between skins, touchable times — yes in-between all the time and no time. Instant(s) that cannot be annulled, taken over, re-, displaced or elevated (surely, other translations of ‘*Aufheben*’ will also do). The ‘now’ is at least doubly conditioned — a truth anyhow incorporated above *and* between men. The urgency to affirm ‘now’, to create, to desire, etc. has by definition little to do with negation or negotiation. Yet Bhabha is right, and Spivak is right, and Arendt was right: the neo-imperialist’s disregard for the so-called ‘refugee’ was globally algorithmically implemented. And there remain so many ‘priorities’ of political allegiance — when *not* go astray? — who can even say that they are categorizable, and countable? Heautocratic techniques of art ‘articulate’ in another ‘writing’ — in an incalculable temporality — silhouettes of flash politics. It’s about time the language of art to be felt as an immeasurable urgency, striking ‘now’, recognized as politically interventive power, the language of a cosmopolitan ‘mining’ and transformation of governments, governments that are ‘now’ hardly anything more than sly nationalist symbolic sedaters (Moten: excluding and regulating difference). Not an anti- or anarchic struggle but the dissemi-nation (the hyphen is Bhabha’s) of singular effects mining the systemic erectile force, mindset, dispositive, algorithm of state-and-market-apparatuses. Indeed a hybrid

moment of political change, just impossible to time. 'We' cannot and 'we' don't even have to construct such an art politics: in a way nation based educational art institutions, and the "supposedly disinterested scholars associated with them" (Arendt) do the job already perhaps without knowing it, even. For them the prejudice of aesthetics should only be acceptable if by 'beauty', 'sublimity', 'arty' (or in whatever qualification some piece is being judged) is meant 'just', 'right', 'now'. Art institutions can become birthplaces of practices transgressing, heading towards justice. Alright, "art always exceeds the work" (Moten). But there are certain limits, certain puritan restrictions in need to be transgressed 'now', archipelagically loosened, to enable the acceleration of multiple sovereignties — because 'critique of sovereignty' (Moten/Gaines) isn't possible without (another) sovereignty. Sovereignty and autonomy turned out to be epiphenomena of wars and battles, and not the other way around (you don't have to read Carl Schmitt for that insight), hence neither of the two can be called more fundamental, neither god nor state, yet both still seem irrefutable busy. Algorithmishly speaking those sovereignties have a certain intersective rhythm of power. Which doesn't mean that suffering from anticipation angst of loosing 'my autonomy' would be instantly curable just by a work of art. Instead of, or at least just as effectively, enthusiastically endorsed, nationalistic diseases need both anti-dotes and enforcements in the form of trans-cosmopolitan 'propaganda art' (Jonas Staal) or Andrea Voets' teaching borderline experiences. Say it is possible to think in means-end-relations-without-end (Kant) with respect to justice — heading without head — concepts and works are the tools that artists experiment with, in order to enable the emergence of a just 'now'. Where? The Kantian auto-matryoshka nesting the trias of soul-world-god is already being cracked, just as Montesquieu's trias politica, effectuated in different European tempi, certainly in displacement, not disappearing. But how? Call them (Greek) sovereign muses that lay bare power-relations all the time and make us 'now' aware of the singular potential of an art jaculated and 'injected in the body politic' (Stuart Hall).