

Lucie Tuma: The making of ecologies of attention



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With the increasing use of everyday technologies, the concept of attention has gained prominence in discourses of cultural studies and philosophy in recent years. Situated between activity and passivity, it is often described as a threshold phenomenon of perception, as the result of a clash between environments, (aesthetic) dispositifs and the experiences that take place within them. Historically, a certain understanding of attention as an intense state of concentration on something foregrounded, something singled out has dominated. Against the background of an increasing optimisation and economisation of attention, this work describes different modes of attention and therefore expands the notion away from its so far singular understanding. Such pluralisation entails an ecological understanding of the term.

The object of investigation of the research project is an experimental exhibition practice at Shedhalle Zurich (PROTOZONES 2020-2025). During five years, exhibitions with a focus on process-based arts take place as „protozones“. With the ecological orientation of this work, the protozone is proposed as a meshwork (Tim Ingold). The concept of meshwork describes an environment as a processual, living collection of relationships between more-than-human and human forces and ways of being.

Attention emerges along these very lines of relations, marks them, shows itself in different modes and cannot be assigned to a subject or an object alone. Thus, it serves to make visible relations between persons, objects, affects, concepts, infrastructures and materials. Attention thus becomes a process and an activity in which persons as well as more-than-human elements participate with their possibilities, capacities and affordances. Through this ecological description of attention, it emerges as a form of productivity. This in turn links the concept closely to questions and discourses of labour, care and value. The project is situated within the horizon of a contemporary transnational exhibition practice. How does an ecological understanding of attention affect artistic practices, institutional operations and aesthetic experience? Does the pluralisation of attention(s) into different modes lead to an expansion of exhibition practice in its formats, temporalities and procedures?

Lucie Tuma is responsible for one of the protozones (exhibitions) per year. The practice-oriented research work reflects and analyses the working methods, production processes and modes of attention at three points: In the process of creation of the artistic practices, during the development of the exhibition and at the moment of visiting the exhibition. So far, [Protozone2: Making histories together in more-than-human worlds \(2021\)](#) and [Protozone7: Zones of Kinship, Love & Playbour \(2022\)](#) have taken place in this context.

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