

to what Virilio terms the third interval, the interval of speed-light that is neither temporal nor spatial. I call such interval “Women’s Time,” as possibly defining Japan’s Time: an interval in the film, “where in the heart of an insular culture, even the mobile world of invisible narrators, of uneven times and odd rhythms finds its place in the precise framing of daily activities” (quoted from *The Fourth Dimension*).

We are here at the edge of nature and culture, somewhere between the human, the animal, the vegetal, the machine, and the spiritual. Somewhere between the desire for augmented reality and remote control, and the need for a simple undivided way with the world. On the one hand, there is the move toward virtual perfection—the virtuality of high definition. On the other hand, there is a plural return among leading Western thinkers to the light of ancient Asian wisdom. For, rather than letting the old opposition between mind and body take a new lease on life with the perfection of virtual power, Asian thought often refers to the Snare of Illusion in which mortals are caught by their own doings. As a quote of Zen master Dogen says at the end of *The Fourth Dimension*, “the entire world is our mind,” to which he also added, “the mind of a flower.”

D: *In thinking about your work as exhibited in the context of Documenta 11 (2002), how would you describe the relationship between politics and aesthetics in your films?*

T: This relationship is always present in my work. But to continue our discussion on images and reality effect, politics is there where “we work with being.” We are all engaged in the rituals in our everyday—the rituals of social life or of technology—but by remaining unaware of their artistic propensity, we remain caught in conformity. Rituals treated as rituals the way I did in *The Fourth Dimension* allow one to turn an instrument into a creative tool and to step out of the one-dimensional, technologically servile mind. For such a path of change, there is no short cut. In this age of infomania, where one can travel endlessly in cyberspace, efficacy and rapidity of means of reproduction and destruction require that reaction times be shortened and reflection times almost nonexistent. But when events happen so fast that one becomes a witness before realizing it, one is bound to slow down and to take one’s time.

Information retrieval systems dominate and convenience often beats quality. There is a growing obsession with data without much concern for perspective and significance. With a mind set upon information, we develop the habit of *collecting* knowledge bits, often believing that literacy, culture, and politics are a matter of having the facts and evidences right at our fingertips. We demand that everything be at our disposal and expect access to be immediate and simultaneous—hence, our fascination with programs that promote instantaneous multidriving and multitasking. Such a power gained at the price of our direct involvement with people, events, and things is part of the profound syndrome of our information age. As convenience can, more often than not, be punishing to both form and content, concerns for integrity and substance are likely to be replaced by the need for hi-tech-looking programs that allow one to make “power points with bullets to followers.” The pervasive attitude of commercialism has been turning every event into a sales pitch.

Slowness as a strategy of resistance is much needed in the speed of urban routine life. The film *Naked Spaces – Living is Round*, which was selected for exhibition at



Documenta 11 together with three other films of mine (*Reassemblage*, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, and *Shoot for the Contents*) can certainly be seen as an ode to slowness. Or to the daily rhythms of the peoples of West Africa. Not only do the lengths of my films raise issues in the world of experimental films, but the way I work with film as time (rather than film as movement), and the way duration, temporalities, rhythms, and other elements of cinema are treated as inseparable from the subject shown also make the experience of film quite excruciating for impatient viewers. The time here is neither that of information or of entertainment. As a statement in *The Fourth Dimension* reminds, “Keep to the time as required by television; screen space, say TV programmers, is always, always limited. But, as novelist Hisashi Inoue once said, ‘I don’t like bonsaiism . . . it’s perfectly alright for some trees to grow big and wild.’”

In times of coercive politics and transnational terror, slowing down so as to learn to listen anew is a necessity. For me this is particularly relevant, as I turn to digital systems in my last two films, *The Fourth Dimension* and *Night Passage*. For the question is not so much to produce a *new image* as to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a *new seeing*. Science without conscience, politics without ethics, technology without poetry result in deadly short-circuits. We’ve had to learn this, not only through disastrous political events, but more intimately through one’s own body when it is under stress—the wired-up body that takes months to wind down, to recover, or to find its own rhythm. Non-being is what we use in working with being . . . when we start taking care of this utter silence, life speaks to us in a different language, one in which we catch glimpses of stillness in movement and feel movement arising in stillness. Velocity in stillness. Some viewers have spoken at length on such dynamics and on what they see as unexpected moments of stillness in the midst of rapid cuts and movements in *The Fourth Dimension*. Speed is here not opposed to slowness, for it is in stillness that one may be said to truly find speed. And rather than merely going against speed, stillness contains speed and determines its quality. Speed at its best in digital imaging is *still speed*. The speed of a flower mind.

D: *Dogen’s sense of the “mind of a flower” seems to relate to your works’ ode to slowness: there is an unveiling, an unfurling of layers across an extended and sometimes imperceptible time. How might this “vegetal” mindset relate to your interest in a “new seeing?” How might your re-conceptualization of production and reception, of creating and viewing, be a political intervention? Perhaps you can discuss Okwui Enwezor’s approach to display and exhibition in Documenta, and the context in which your work was produced and received.*

T: It takes me some time to fully answer your question because there’s the politics of production and reception, and there’s the politics of exhibition. Documenta, Kassel’s museum of 100 days, is a colossal cultural manifestation—significantly held in a small, remote town of the German countryside. Documenta can be said to be initially conceived as a break with a whole tradition of art exhibition, as well as a challenge to the art establishment of the Nazi totalitarian regime. However, as a large-scale transnational exhibition, Documenta’s ambivalent participation in the marketing of global culture today is always under critical scrutiny. Although both Documenta 10 and 11 are conceived as counter globalization efforts. The former was blamed, for example,