



the agony of attention

art as power

update

#15

in a small building on the island of teshima in japan,  
you can have your heartbeat recorded  
for it to be added to a database of sounds from the heart.

an intense project by the french artist christian boltanski,  
called 'les archives du cœur'.  
providing profound attention to individual existence,  
heartbeat by heartbeat



denkmal für die ermordeten juden europas, in berlin  
it is there, always  
not on demand  
not to be avoided

a monumental moment of remembrance

a profound antidote to the agony of attention

'The agony of attention' is a notion that is as actual as it is evocative. It stretches from expressing one's own identity to the power of data giants who with ai steer our eyeballs. It relates to the idea that attention is one of the most scarce and precious resources for individuals and organisations. We are confronted with the dilemma that the amount of attention asked for is much larger than what can be genuinely supplied.

It is a subject that fascinates me since a long time and the artlab in its next project will investigate it further.

Can we find new frames to tackle this agony and consider whether attention can be something beyond the daily madness of the fight for it?

The arts with its continuous power to capture our imagination while dealing with the 'condition humain' will be a great source of inspiration.

The outcomes may be helpful for people within organisations to find their own ways of avoiding the agony. Attention is after all key in realising as a group of people the things that matter. For that reason several organisations will participate in the project to address some of their specific angles to attention.

The artlab project will initially run for two months in paris starting half march, 2022. In the coming updates I will share some of the outcomes of this project.



speech can not happen  
unless hearing exists

these words referring to the work of juan muñoz  
guided earlier work of stordes  
and remain intriguing  
when thinking about the agony of attention

illustrations:

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photo's by hein duijnste

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juan muñoz, conversation pieces, 1991

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