

ABSTRACT

John Akomfrah's extraordinary sound and video installation *Listening All Night to the Rain* (2024) was commissioned for the British Pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale (*Foreigners Everywhere – Stranieri Ovunque*). Constructed of eight audio-visual 'cantos' presented outside and within the British Pavilion, it sought to explore "the structural forces behind climate colonialism, forced migration, and the resulting impact on our environment" (British Council Digital Guide, 2025). This essay analyses *Listening All Night to the Rain* as an instance of knowledge production, examining its dramatization of the structural and epistemological underpinnings of contemporary climate catastrophe in the context of digital culture and the attention economy.

KEYWORDS

John Akomfrah, Venice Biennale, environment, climate catastrophe, digital culture, attention economy

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**‘Will-to-know’:
cultural reckoning
with climate
catastrophe**

SAŽETAK

Izvanredna zvučna i videoinstalacija Johna Akomfraha *Listening All Night to the Rain* (2024.) naručena je za Britanski paviljon na Venecijanskom bijenalu 2024. godine pod radnim naslovom „Foreigners Everywhere – Stranieri Ovunque“. Sastavljena od osam audiovizualnih „pjevanja“, predstavljenih unutar i izvan Britanskog paviljona, instalacija je nastojala istražiti „strukturne sile koje stoje iza klimatskog kolonijalizma i prisilnih migracija, kao i njihov posljedični utjecaj na naš okoliš“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2025). Ovaj esej analizira rad *Listening All Night to the Rain* kao primjer produkcije znanja, ispitujući njegovu dramatizaciju strukturnih i epistemoloških temelja suvremene klimatske katastrofe u kontekstu digitalne kulture i ekonomije pozornosti.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

John Akomfrah, Venecijanski bijenale, okoliš, klimatska katastrofa, digitalna kultura, ekonomija pažnje

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**Volja za znanjem:
kulturno suočavanje
s klimatskom
katastrofom**

Introduction

With every day that passes, extreme weather events escalate in number and severity, with rising temperatures, wildfires, floods and storms devastating lives and livelihoods across the world and becoming increasingly prevalent in the rich West. In the face of the evidence, the reality of climate catastrophe and the need for systemic action seem irrefutable. Thus, Tad DeLay begins *Future of Denial: the Ideologies of Climate Change* by observing that “the age of denial is over, or so we are regularly told” (DeLay, 2024, p.8). The latter phrase clues us in to the argument to come: DeLay’s purpose is to closely analyse the proliferating ways in which the age of denial is not over at all and the role of discourse in constructing social possibilities, in an account he presents from an anti-capitalist standpoint which recognises capitalism to be the “generator” of climate catastrophe (2024, p. 17). “Denial”, DeLay proposes, “is not an incorrect thought to be transcended or an age to be passed”; rather, it is “best theorized as a tendency to negate threats in accord with material relations, generating symptomatic activity in order to justify, curate, and maintain regimes of power and material relations” (2024, p. 14).

The artwork that I discuss in this essay about knowledge production is dedicated towards a close interrogation of such regimes and relations – John Akomfrah’s extraordinary sound and video installation *Listening All Night to the Rain* (2024), commissioned for the British Pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale (*Foreigners Everywhere – Stranieri Ovunque*). Constructed of eight audio-visual ‘cantos’ presented outside and within the British Pavilion, it is a devastating piece which seeks to explore “the structural forces behind climate colonialism, forced migration, and the resulting impact on our environment” (British Council Digital Guide, 2025). It approaches climate catastrophe as a phenomenon centuries in the making. Stitching together representational schema, historical events and surrealist gestures, it offers to the audience member moving through the British Pavilion a sensate glimpse of the world’s theatres of violent domination and acts of complicity and resistance across time.

Produced by and for a global artworld event, it is also inescapably caught up in contradiction relative to the issues it addresses. Noting its scale as an undertaking, Luiza Luz proposes of *Foreigners Everywhere* that “the Biennale’s carbon footprint exacerbates the climate and humanitarian issues that disproportionately impact the very communities it seeks to protect” (Luz, 2024). These contradictions are born of systemic reliance on the finite and polluting resource of fossil fuels and the intensity of energy consumption demanded by Western lifestyles, including the artworld biennale as a model of cultural production and consumption. In common with hundreds of thousands of other visitors, I arrived from overseas for the 2024 Venice Biennale first as a holidaymaker, intent on spending money and leisure time to pursue my interest in art, inevitably then encountering pieces that inspired ideas for my academic work. I attended *Listening All Night to the Rain* alone on my first day in the city in September 2024, and then in the company of friends the following day. I visited once more in November 2024, when I took another budget flight for an overnight stay specifically to see it, now for a professional purpose: to prepare a lecture. I had arranged the November flight a few days before my smartphone was stolen on the London Underground and all my photos of the September visit with it – an event which ‘justified’, post-hoc, my decision to go again, which had been made possible in any case by the availability of a flight of less than £50 return. As I searched the price-comparison website Skyscanner for the cheapest flight, a range of thoughts had run through my mind: a recollection of the

Uvod

Svakim danom koji prolazi ekstremni vremenski događaji eskaliraju u broju i težini; rastuće temperature, šumski požari, poplave i oluje uništavaju živote i sredstva za život diljem svijeta, postajući sve učestaliji i na bogatom Zapadu. Suočeni s dokazima, stvarnost klimatske katastrofe i potreba za sustavnim djelovanjem čine se nepobitnima. Tad DeLay započinje djelo *Future of Denial: The Ideologies of Climate Change* zapažanjem da je „doba poricanja završilo ili nam se barem tako redovito govori“ (DeLay, 2024, str. 8). Potonja fraza upućuje na argument koji slijedi: DeLay u svom prikazu nastoji pomno analizirati mnogostruke načine na koje doba poricanja nipošto nije završilo kao i ulogu diskursa u konstrukciji društvenih mogućnosti, i čini to s antikapitalističkog stajališta koje prepoznaje kapitalizam kao „generators“ klimatske katastrofe (2024, str. 17). „Poricanje“, sugerira DeLay, „nije neispravna misao koju treba nadići ili doba koje treba proći“, naprotiv, ono se „najbolje teorijski promišlja kao tendencija negiranja prijetnji u skladu s materijalnim odnosima, generirajući simptomatsku aktivnost kako bi se opravdali, njegovali i održavali režimi moći i materijalni odnosi“ (2024, str. 14).

Umjetničko djelo o kojem raspravljam u ovom radu o proizvodnji znanja posvećeno je pomnu ispitivanju takvih režima i odnosa – radi se o izvanrednoj zvučnoj i videoinstalaciji Johna Akomfraha *Listening All Night to the Rain*, rađenoj po narudžbi za Britanski paviljon na Venecijanskom bijenalu 2024. pod tematskim naslovom „Stranci posvuda“. Sastavljen od osam audiovizualnih „pjevanja“, predstavljenih izvan i unutar Britanskog paviljona, rad predstavlja potresno djelo koje nastoji istražiti „strukturne sile iza klimatskog kolonijalizma, prisilnih migracija i posljedičnog utjecaja na naš okoliš“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2025). Rad pristupa klimatskoj katastrofi kao fenomenu koji se stvarao stoljećima. Spajajući reprezentacijske sheme, povijesne događaje i nadrealističke geste, gledatelju koji se kreće kroz Britanski paviljon nudi osjetilni uvid u svjetska prizorišta nasilne dominacije te činove sudionitva i otpora kroz vrijeme.

Produciran za potrebe globalnog događaja u svijetu umjetnosti, rad je neizbježno zahvaćen proturječjem u odnosu na pitanja kojima se bavi. Primjećujući razmjere tog pothvata, Luiza Luz upućuje na to da „ugljični otisak Bijenala pogoršava klimatska i humanitarna pitanja koja nerazmjerno pogađaju upravo one zajednice koje nastoji zaštititi“ (Luz, 2024). Ta proturječja proizlaze iz sustavnog oslanjanja na ograničene i zagađujuće resurse fosilnih goriva te iz intenziteta potrošnje energije koju zahtijevaju zapadni stilovi života, što uključuje i umjetničko bijenale kao model kulturne proizvodnje i potrošnje. Zajedno sa stotinama tisuća drugih posjetitelja doputovala sam iz inozemstva na Venecijanski bijenale 2024., najprije kao turist, s namjerom da svoj novac i slobodno vrijeme potrošim na umjetnost, neizbježno se potom susrećući s djelima koja su nadahnula ideje za moj akademski rad. *Listening All Night to the Rain* posjetila sam sama, odmah prvog dana u gradu u rujnu 2024., a potom u društvu prijatelja sljedećeg dana. Posjetila sam ga još jednom u studenom 2024., kada sam uzela još jedan niskobudžetni let i jednodnevni boravak posebno kako bih ga vidjela, sada u profesionalne svrhe, radi pripreme predavanja. Let u studenom rezervirala sam nekoliko dana prije nego što mi je pametni telefon ukraden u londonskoj podzemnoj željeznici, a s njim i sve fotografije iz rujanskog posjeta – događaj koji je, *post-hoc*, „opravdao“ moju odluku da odem ponovno, što je ionako omogućila dostupnost povratnog leta za manje od 50 funti. Dok sam pretraživala internetsku stranicu za usporedbu cijena Skyscanner u potrazi za najjeftinijim letom, niz misli prolazio mi je glavom: sjećanje na snažnu emocionalnu reakciju koju je instalacija izazvala u meni, osjećaj nedovoljno provedenog vremena uz nju i želje da je bolje razumijem, te rastući osjećaj osobne neodgovornosti, ali i perspektiva pripreme nastave – još jedno kreposno opravdanje za ponovni odlazak

powerful emotional response the installation had elicited in me, the sense of insufficient time spent with it and a desire to understand it further, and a creeping sense of personal irresponsibility but the prospect of my teaching preparation, another virtuous justification for engaging for a second time in international travel to attend a visual arts event - its purpose was valuable knowledge production.

Listening All Night to the Rain responds concretely to the British Pavilion by juxtaposing video and sound around, upon and within it, and by constructing a journey for audience members through its environment. It uses these modes in 2024 to address an architectural site built in an imperial moment more than a hundred years previously, and to speak of violence of even longer historical standing. I propose that Akomfrah's installation thereby reckons with climate catastrophe in two ways: in content, by remediating historical material, and in form, by experientially articulating the overwhelming compass and basis of the catastrophe and its imbrication in economic, political and representational structures. Key to the work's experiential construction and reception is what Jonathan Crary calls the "internet complex": "inseparable from the immense, incalculable scope of 24/7 capitalism and its frenzy of accumulation, extraction, circulation, production, transport, and construction, on a global scale" (Crary, 2022, p. 6). The installation makes abundant use of digital screens to present visual imagery, but digital culture itself is not an explicit referent within it – seemingly quite the opposite, in fact, in its staging of defunct, largely analogue audio equipment and its focus on events prior to the commencement of the 21st century. Nonetheless, in its recursive historical choreography of information, *Listening All Night to the Rain* is dramaturgically informed by larger spectatorial contexts and horizons for knowledge conditioned by the digital. However, these contexts and horizons are only part of its aesthetic and conceptual intervention, which addresses much longer-term questions of colonial violence and historical memory.

In *Towards a Digital Epistemology*, Jonas Ingvarsson notes that "the concept of 'analog' is more or less a construction *derived* from digital culture" (Ingvarsson, 2021, p. 3). Elaborating on the concept of 'digital epistemology', he proposes two interlinked ideas: that "media and cultural artifacts not only depict our existence but, moreover, determine how we observe it"; and that in the context of the networked, digitally mediated present, we see particular "attention directed to the materialities of media, and on the insistence upon a historicizing, yet non-linear, perspective" (2021, pp. 10, 21). This approach is embodied by Akomfrah's Venice Biennale commission. The internet complex is manifestly connected too with the more contemporary historical developments presented within *Listening All Night to the Rain*, given the implication of that complex in the functioning of the capitalist system in the contemporary. The internet complex has delineated new bases for knowledge production and recalibrated how people engage their attention both inside and outside of the sphere of cultural work, with distraction, overwhelm and the trope of the 'attention economy' the hallmarks of what Richard Seymour calls the "social industry" (Seymour, 2019). These are similarly the focus of Claire Bishop's recent book *Disordered Attention: How We Look At Art and Performance Today* (2024), which I discuss below. Thinking through these aspects, I see *Listening All Night to the Rain* as the scene of both the enactment of and challenge to these arrangements – a complex digital media installation of several hours' duration, whose detailed construction imaginatively maps the historical inter-articulation of coloniality and capitalism. While the corporate-sponsored operation of the Biennale and other global festivals like it might be understood as exemplary of the modality of climate denial, *Listening All Night to the Rain* dramatized the structural and epistemological underpinnings of contemporary climate catastrophe, raising perhaps insoluble questions as to the artworld context through which its own insights become available.

na međunarodno putovanje radi posjeta umjetničkom događaju sa svrhom vrijedne proizvodnje znanja.

Listening All Night to the Rain konkretno odgovara na zgradu Britanskog paviljona suprotstavljanjem videa i zvuka oko njega, na njemu i unutar njega, te organiziranjem obilaska publike kroz to okruženje. Te moduse koristi u 2024. godini kako bi problematizirao arhitektonsko mjesto izgrađeno u imperijalnom trenutku, prije više od sto godina, i kako bi progovorio o nasilju još duljeg povijesnog staža. Tvrdim da se Akomfrahova instalacija time obračunava s klimatskom katastrofom na dva načina: sadržajno, remedijacijom povijesnog materijala, i formalno, iskustvenim artikuliranjem sveprožimajućeg učinka i temelja katastrofe te njezine isprepletenosti s ekonomskim, političkim i reprezentacijskim strukturama. Ključno za iskustvenu konstrukciju i recepciju rada jest ono što Jonathan Crary naziva „internetskim kompleksom“: „neodvojivim od neizmjernog, nesagledivog dosega sveprisutnog kapitalizma i mahnitosti njegove akumulacije, ekstrakcije, cirkulacije, proizvodnje, transporta i izgradnje na globalnoj razini“ (Crary, 2022, str. 6). Instalacija obilato koristi digitalne zaslone za projiciranje vizualnih motiva, ali sama digitalna kultura u njoj nije eksplicitni referent – dapače, korištenje zastarjele, uglavnom analogne audioopreme i fokus na događaje prije početka 21. stoljeća daju suprotan dojam. Ipak, u svojoj rekurzivno-povijesnoj koreografiji informacija *Listening All Night to the Rain* dramaturški je oblikovana širim gledateljskim kontekstima i horizontima znanja uvjetovanim digitalnom sferom. Međutim, ovi konteksti i obzori tek su dio njezine estetske i konceptualne intervencije koja se bavi znatno dugoročnijim pitanjima kolonijalnog nasilja i povijesnog sjećanja.

U djelu *Towards a Digital Epistemology* Jonas Ingvarsson primjećuje da je „koncept 'analognog' manje-više konstrukcija proizašla iz digitalne kulture“ (Ingvarsson, 2021, str. 3). Razrađujući koncept „digitalne epistemologije“, Ingvarsson predlaže dvije međusobno povezane ideje: da „mediji i kulturni artefakti ne samo da prikazuju naše postojanje nego, štoviše, određuju kako ga promatramo“, te da u kontekstu umrežene, digitalno posredovane sadašnjosti vidimo osobito „pažnju usmjerenu na materijalnost medija i na inzistiranje na historizirajućoj, ali nelinearnoj perspektivi“ (2021, str. 10, 21). Ovakav pristup utjelovljuje Akomfrahov rad za Venecijanski bijenale. Internetski kompleks očito je povezan i s nešto suvremenijim povijesnim razvojem prikazanim unutar *Listening All Night to the Rain*, s obzirom na upletenost toga kompleksa u funkcioniranje kapitalističkog sustava u suvremenosti. Internetski kompleks ocrtao je nove temelje za proizvodnju znanja i rekalibrirao načine na koje ljudi organiziraju svoju pažnju unutar i izvan sfere kulturnog rada, pri čemu su rastresenost, preplavljenost i trop „ekonomije pažnje“ obilježja onoga što Richard Seymour naziva „društvenom industrijom“ (Seymour, 2019). To je slično problematici na koju se fokusira i nedavna knjiga Claire Bishop *Disordered Attention: How We Look At Art and Performance Today* iz 2024. o kojoj raspravljam u nastavku. Razmišljajući o tim aspektima, instalaciju *Listening All Night to the Rain* vidim kao poprište istovremenog uprizorenja i osporavanja tih uređenja – riječ je o kompleksnoj instalaciji digitalnih medija u trajanju od nekoliko sati, detaljna konstrukcija koje maštovito mapira povijesnu međupovezanost kolonijalnosti i kapitalizma. Dok se rad Bijenala, pod korporativnim sponzorstvom, i drugih sličnih globalnih festivala može shvatiti kao primjer modaliteta klimatskog poricanja, *Listening All Night to the Rain* dramaturgizirao je strukturne i epistemološke temelje suvremene klimatske katastrofe, postavljajući možda nerješiva pitanja o kontekstu svijeta umjetnosti kroz koja njezini vlastiti uvidi postaju dostupni.

Totality

To begin the discussion, I turn first to theorists who address the relation between capitalism, epistemology and representation. Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkle's *Cartographies of the Absolute* approaches capitalism as systemic totality, addressing efforts on the part of artists to reckon with "the problem of visualising or narrating capitalism today" (Toscano & Kinkle, 2015, p. 22). With its method, centuries-long historical purview, and chosen objects of representation – to be discussed in more detail in the final part of this essay – Akomfrah's installation certainly falls under this heading. Toscano and Kinkle's purpose is to set out some theories and implications of how art participates in what Fredric Jameson theorised as 'cognitive mapping'. In introducing the book, they speak about "the processes of inquiry and sight involved in the endeavour to understand the world, and the magnitude of the ambition behind such an all-encompassing will-to-know" (2015, p. 3) where contemporary technologies such as Google Maps and the larger emergence of Big Data have radically expanded the scope of these processes and ambitions. Their opening example is a short film which pre-dates the massification of digital technology: *Powers of Ten* (1977), made by the Office of Charles and Ray Eames.

Toscano and Kinkle describe how the film begins with a plan view shot of a couple relaxing on a picnic blanket in a Chicago park. Gradually the 'camera' – in fact "a painstakingly composite simulation" (2015, p. 1) – ascends into the deepest reaches of space, to the power of ten with every ten seconds that passes, each segment of distance measured visually by a geometric outline. The shot then travels back down again, addressing the skin of the man's hand ever more closely until the camera seems to register sub-atomic particles. They draw a parallel between this film, and two others similarly employing overhead shots as part of their visual dramaturgy – Alan Pakula's *All The President's Men* (1976), Alain Resnais' *Toute la Memoire du Monde* (1956) – describing how Jameson advanced the latter examples as dramatizing a metaphysics of knowledge, wherein their protagonists' search for understanding transcendentally coincides momentarily with the architectural form of the buildings within which that knowledge is pursued (the Library of Congress, the Bibliothèque Nationale). These gestures displace attention from the more fundamentally structuring force of capital, which Jameson insisted was "the ultimate referent, the true ground of being in our time" (Toscano & Kinkle, 2015, p.3). As a countermeasure, Jameson sought after "the aesthetic of cognitive mapping": as Toscano and Kinkle put it, "the imperative elaboration of a cultural and representational practice adequate to the highly ambitious (and, Jameson suggests, ultimately impossible), task of depicting social space and class relations in our epoch of late capitalism or postmodernity" (2015, p. 6). Cognitive mapping is historically grounded; as Toscano and Kinkle argue, "each epoch develops cultural forms and modes of expression that allow it, however partially and ideologically, to represent its world, to 'totalise' it" (2015, p. 7). Like Jameson before them, they propose that critical attention should grapple with "the consolidation of a planetary nexus of capitalist power and the multifarious struggles to imagine it" (2015, p. 10). Akomfrah's *Listening All Night to the Rain* arguably constitutes one such imaginative struggle.

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Totalitet

Za početak rasprave okrećem se najprije teoretičarima koji se bave odnosom između kapitalizma, epistemologije i reprezentacije. Knjiga Alberta Toscana i Jeffa Kinklea *Cartographies of the Absolute* pristupa kapitalizmu kao sustavnom totalitetu, baveći se naporima umjetnika da se obračunaju s „problemom vizualizacije ili naracije kapitalizma danas“ (Toscano i Kinkle, 2015, str. 22). Svojom metodom, povijesnim horizontom dugim nekoliko stoljeća i odabranim objektima reprezentacije – o kojima će detaljnije biti riječi u završnom dijelu ovog rada – Akomfrahova instalacija svakako spada u ovakav koncept. Cilj je Toscana i Kinklea iznijeti neke teorije i implikacije o tome kako umjetnost sudjeluje u onome što je Fredric Jameson teorijski artikulirao kao „kognitivno mapiranje“. U uvodu knjige govore o „procesima istraživanja i gledanja uključenima u nastojanje da se razumije svijet, te o veličini ambicije koja stoji iza takve sveobuhvatne volje za znanjem“ (2015, str. 3), gdje su suvremene tehnologije poput Google Mapsa i pojava velikih podataka radikalno proširile opseg tih procesa i ambicija. Početni im je primjer kratki film, koji prethodi masovnosti digitalne tehnologije – *Powers of Ten* iz 1977. – koji je kreirao Ured Charlesa i Raya Eamesa.

Toscano i Kinkle opisuju kako film počinje snimkom para iz ptičje perspektive koji se opušta na dekici u jednom čikaškom parku. Postupno se „kamera“ – zapravo „brižna kompozitna simulacija“ (2015, str. 1) – uzdiže u najviše sfere svemira, na potenciju broja deset sa svakih deset sekundi koje prođu, pri čemu se svaki segment udaljenosti mjeri vizualno geometrijskim obrisom. Kadar se zatim ponovno spušta, fokusirajući se na kožu muške ruke, sve bliže, dok se ne učini da kamera registrira subatomske čestice. Autori povlače paralelu između ovog filma i dva druga, koji slično koriste gornje rakurse kao dio svoje vizualne dramaturgije – *All the President's Men* Alana Pakule iz 1976. i *Toute la mémoire du monde* Alaina Resnaisa iz 1956. – opisujući kako je Jameson isticao potonje primjere kao dramatizaciju metafizike znanja, pri čemu se potraga njihovih protagonista za razumijevanjem transcendentno na trenutak podudara s arhitektonskom formom zgrada unutar kojih se to znanje traži (Kongresna knjižnica, Nacionalna knjižnica). Te geste premještaju pažnju s temeljnije strukturne sile kapitala, za koju je Jameson inzistirao da je „krajnji referent, istinsko uporište bitka u našem vremenu“ (Toscano i Kinkle, 2015, str. 3). Kao protumjeru, Jameson je tražio „estetiku kognitivnog mapiranja“: kako to Toscano i Kinkle navode, „imperativnu razradu kulturne i reprezentacijske prakse adekvatne vrlo ambicioznom (i, sugerira Jameson, u konačnici nemogućem) zadatku prikazivanja društvenog prostora i klasnih odnosa u našoj epohi kasnog kapitalizma ili postmodernosti“ (2015, str. 6). Kognitivno mapiranje povijesno je utemeljeno; kako tvrde Toscano i Kinkle, „svaka epoha razvija kulturne oblike i načine izražavanja koji joj omogućuju, koliko god djelomično i ideološki, da predstavlja svoj svijet, da ga 'totalizira'“ (2015, str. 7). Poput Jamesona prije njih, predlažu da se kritička pažnja uhvati ukoštac s „konsolidacijom planetarnog nekusa kapitalističke moći i raznolikim borbama da se on zamisli“ (2015, str. 10). Akomfrahov *Listening All Night to the Rain* predstavlja, može se reći, jednu takvu imaginacijsku borbu.

Kao i drugi autori koji se bave filmom *Powers of Ten*, Toscano i Kinkle fokus stavljaju na vizualnost.¹ No film Eamesovih iz 1977. sadrži i glas koji objašnjava te glazbu plodnog

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ET AL.

¹ Naprimjer, svaki od ovih tekstova bilježi prisutnost Bernsteinove kompozicije, ali se fokusira na sliku, dimenziju i razmjer: Reggie Bain, 'Scaling the Universe', *Natural History*, 122, 10 (2014), str. 48; Kyle Stine, 'Other Ends of Cinema: Powers of Ten, Exponential Data, and the Archive of Scientific Images', *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, 59, 2 (2020), str. 114–137. Schraderov tekst bavi se ranijom, prototipnom verzijom filma *Powers of Ten*, dovršenom 1968. godine, te donosi filmografiju s detaljima Bernsteinovih doprinosa na nekoliko drugih projekata: Paul Schrader, 'Poetry of Ideas: The Films of Charles Eames', *Film Quarterly*, 23, 3 (1970), str. 2–19.

As with other writers addressing *Powers of Ten*, Toscano and Kinkle's focus is visuality.¹ But the Eames' 1977 film also possesses an explanatory voiceover and a score by the prolific and renowned composer Elmer Bernstein, the author of numerous soundtracks across cinematic genres. Bernstein entered into a lengthy collaborative relationship with Charles and Ray Eames in the early 1950s having been 'greylisted' as part of McCarthy's anti-Communist investigations of artists working in Hollywood. *Powers of Ten*, one of more than forty projects Bernstein scored for the Eames, is part of a body of work that biographer Peter M. Bernstein calls "his chamber music" (Bernstein, 2023, p. 37). Elmer Bernstein himself reflected on making use, in these projects, of "small but interesting combinations of instruments" ranging from woodwind, brass, harp and cello to the Yamaha E5 electric organ (2023, p. 37). The soundtrack of *Powers of Ten* underscores and accentuates the spoken words of the voiceover, providing a supporting narrative arc to the journey of the shot. Against its title card, the film begins with a discordant electronic sequence whose harmonies speak to 1970s police procedurals – the sense of threat and intrigue leavened by almost comically delicate electronic percussion – before transitioning to a surreal fairground waltz, sprinkled with phrases recalling Bach, which accompanies the couple's picnic as a scene of leisure. As the voiceover takes over, the score's volume diminishes and its instrumentation thins, but a melody picked out by an electronic organ models a sense of the human voice. As the shot speeds further into space, the composition becomes more eerie and science fictional, *en route* playing with time signatures and incorporating chords which invoke liturgical music and a melody redolent of Bach's fugues. Back within the earth's atmosphere, in Chicago, as the shot enters into proximity with the human body, percussion now suggests a heartbeat, and the composition's texture echoes its earlier invocation of outer space, now implying the body itself to be a type of universe. The complex subtlety of the composition deepens and extends the film's visual account of "world knowledge as seamless continuum" (2015, p. 4) as Toscano and Kinkle have it, sometimes with humour, but without any fundamental disruption – which perhaps accounts for the composition's absence from their discussion of the film's epistemological claims.

I emphasise the aural aspect of *Powers of Ten*, as *Listening All Night to the Rain* likewise juxtaposes image with sound; indeed, its primary invitation to the audience member, as its title suggests, is to listen. In an interview released on the British Council's YouTube channel a few days before the exhibition's launch, Akomfrah reflected of his work:

It's not really about communicating anything. It's about trying to get people into a space where they can experience, understand, live with questions of listening. That's what the project's about: it's about listening. It's about the ethics, the aesthetics, the problematics, the memories, the histories of listening (*British Council Arts*, 2024).

The installation is thus devoted likewise to engaging with totality, but its sound-world is directed towards unravelling the narrativity that *Powers of Ten* manifests, and producing a different historical understanding, one constructed of echoes and repetitions, wherein

¹ For example, these texts each note the presence of Bernstein's composition but focus on image, dimension and scale: Reggie Bain, 'Scaling the Universe', *Natural History*, 122, 10 (2014), p. 48. Kyle Stine, 'Other Ends of Cinema: Powers of Ten, Exponential Data, and the Archive of Scientific Images', *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, 59, 2 (2020), pp. 114-137. Another text addresses the earlier, prototypical version of *Powers of Ten*, completed in 1968, and provides a filmography with details of Bernstein's contributions to several other projects: Paul Schrader, 'Poetry of Ideas: The Films of Charles Eames', *Film Quarterly*, 23, 3 (1970), pp. 2-19.

i poznatog skladatelja Elmera Bernsteina, autora brojnih soundtrackova u raznim filmskim žanrovima. Bernstein je stupio u dugogodišnju suradnju s Charlesom i Rayom Eamesom početkom 1950-ih, nakon što je stavljen na „crnu listu“ kao dio McCarthyjevih antikomunističkih istraga nad umjetnicima koji rade u Hollywoodu. *Powers of Ten*, jedan od više od četrdeset projekata Eamesovih za koje je Bernstein skladao glazbu, dio je opusa koji biograf Peter M. Bernstein naziva „njegovom komornom glazbom“ (Bernstein, 2023, str. 37). Sam Elmer Bernstein razmišljao je o korištenju „malih, ali zanimljivih kombinacija instrumenata“ u tim projektima, u rasponu od drvenih puhačkih instrumenata, limenih puhača, harfe i čela do električnih orgulja Yamaha E5 (2023, str. 37). Soundtrack filma *Powers of Ten* podcrtava i naglašava izgovorene riječi u *voiceoveru*, pružajući potporni narativni luk putanji kadra. Nakon naslovne kartice film počinje neskladnom elektroničkom sekvencom, harmonije koje podsjećaju na policijske serije iz 1970-ih – osjećaj prijetnje i intrige ublažen gotovo komično delikatnim elektroničkim udaraljka – prije prelaska na nadrealni sajmišni valcer, protkan frazama koje prizivaju Bacha, a koji prati piknik para kao prikaz dokolice. Kako glas preuzima glavnu riječ, glasnoća glazbe se smanjuje, a njezina instrumentacija prorjeđuje, no melodija koju izvode električne orgulje modelira osjećaj ljudskoga glasa. Kako snimka ubrzava dalje u svemir, kompozicija postaje jezivija i nalik znanstvenoj fantastici, igrajući se usput s ritmovima i uključujući akorde koji prizivaju liturgijsku glazbu i melodiju koja podsjeća na Bachove fuge. Povratkom u Zemljinu atmosferu, u Chicago, dok snimka silazi tik do ljudskog tijela, udaraljke sugeriraju otkucaje srca, a tekstura kompozicije odjekuje ranijim prizivanjem vanjskog svemira, implicirajući ovdje da je samo tijelo vrsta svemira. Složena suptilnost kompozicije produbljuje i proširuje vizualni prikaz filma o „svjetskom znanju kao neprekidnom kontinuumu“ (2015, str. 4), kako to kažu Toscano i Kinkle, ponekad s humorom, ali bez ikakva značajnijeg remećenja – što možda objašnjava odsutnost kompozicije iz njihove rasprave o epistemološkim tvrdnjama filma.

Naglašavam slušni aspekt filma *Powers of Ten*, jer *Listening All Night to the Rain* također supostavlja sliku i zvuk; doista, njegov primarni poziv publici, kao što naslov sugerira, jest slušanje. U intervjuu objavljenom na YouTube kanalu British Councila nekoliko dana prije otvaranja izložbe, Akomfrah je komentirao svoj rad:

Ne radi se zapravo o poručivanju bilo čega. Radi se o pokušaju uvođenja ljudi u prostor gdje mogu iskusiti, razumjeti, živjeti s pitanjima slušanja. O tome se radi u projektu: radi se o slušanju. Radi se o etici, esteticima, problematici, sjećanjima, povijestima slušanja (*British Council Arts*, 2024).

Instalacija je tako posvećena angažmanu s totalitetom, ali njezin svijet zvuka usmjeren je prema razotkrivanju narativnosti koju *Powers of Ten* manifestira i proizvodnji drugačijeg povijesnog razumijevanja, onog konstruiranog od odjeka i ponavljanja, u kojem je slušanje i osjetilni i metaforički pothvat. U tom pothvatu Akomfrah zaziva skladateljicu Pauline Oliveros, čiji se savjet „Slušaj sve dok sve ne postane jedno i dok ti ne postaneš dio toga“ pojavljuje ispisan unutar instalacije, te na sličan način akustemologiju, „riječ koju je skovao Steve Feld i koju sam oduvijek volio, kombinirajući akustiku i epistemologiju“ (McCormack, 2024, str. 6). U tekstu iz 2015. Feld određuje akustemologiju kao „znanje-u-djelovanju: znanje-sa i znanje-kroz čujno“ (Feld, 2015, str. 12). Koncept „odbija zamijeniti vizualistički okularcentrizam sonocentričkom kao nekom vrstom determinirajuće sile esencijalističkih osjetilnih master planova“; on se oslanja na antropološka razumijevanja razvijena s ljudima u prašumi Bosavi u Papui Novoj Gvineji o tome kako se „život relacijski gradi kroz slušanje svih vrsta, kao isprepletana prisutnost“ (2018, str. 18). Kao umjetnička intervencija, *Listening All Night to the Rain* kombinira vizualno i zvučno unutar Britanskog paviljona kako bi postulirala takva isprepletanja u odnosu na kolonijalnost i klimatsku katastrofu, ne kao dokumentarni film,

listening is both a sensory and metaphorical undertaking. In this endeavour, Akomfrah calls on composer Pauline Oliveros, whose advice ‘Listen to everything until it all belongs together and you are part of it’ appears inscribed within the installation, and likewise acoustemology, “a word coined by Steve Feld that I’ve always loved, combining acoustics and epistemology” (McCormack, 2024, p. 6). In a 2015 text, Feld frames acoustemology as “knowing-in-action: a knowing-with and knowing-through the audible” (Feld, 2015, p. 12). The concept “refuses to replace visualist ocularcentrism with sonocentrism as any sort of determining force of essentialist sensory master plans”; it draws on anthropological understandings developed with people in the Bosavi rainforest of Papua New Guinea as to how “life is relationally built through all-species listening, as inter-twined presence”(2018, p. 18). As an artistic intervention, *Listening All Night to the Rain* combines the visual and the sonic within the British Pavilion to hypothesise such inter-twinements as they relate to coloniality and climate catastrophe, not as documentary, but as a form of remediation via bricolage and questioning. The inter-articulation of images and sound in this context produces a sense of mystery – partly because some of those images are straightforwardly of question marks on a plain backdrop – but also owing to its approach to semantics. The predominant sound is one of rumbling, rushing water of different qualities throughout the exhibition, juxtaposed with sounds arising from maritime and industrial processes and the chimes of bells, with fragments of music and speech acts derived from archival materials occasionally resounding.

Spanning early modern visual art to modern warfare, the installation’s referential ambit encompasses the catastrophe of regular flooding in Bangladesh since the 1980s, the work of American conservationist Rachel Carson, resistant uprisings, imperial repressions and struggles for independence in Kenya, DRC and Nigeria, the Indian Partition and post-imperial rebuilding, the ecological devastations of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the impact of colonial violence upon indigenous populations in Canada and Colombia (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). Within Britain, the installation “repositions narratives from the Windrush generation”; it invokes the police aggressions towards British-Nigerian David Oluwale in the Yorkshire city of Leeds in the 1960s, and Oluwale’s ultimate death by drowning, as an index of “the discrimination that migrants to Britain faced in the context of the post-industrial decline of the country” (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). Thus, throughout *Listening All Night to the Rain*, “the lives and work of cultural and political figures are woven through stories of wars, migrations and seismic moments in the preservation of our natural world, acting as ghosts or spectres of the past that materialise in our present” (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). The installation mirrors the periodization specified by Immanuel Wallerstein, theorist of capitalism as ‘world system’, who argued that “the world in which we are now living, the modern world-system, had its origins in the sixteenth century. This world-system was then located in only a part of the globe, primarily in parts of Europe and the Americas. It expanded over time to cover the whole globe. It is and has always been a world-economy. It is and has always been a capitalist world-economy” (Wallerstein, 2015, p. 56). These observations regarding circumscribed geographical origins but totalising economic horizons point towards the predication of capitalist development on colonial violence and theft (Sharpe, 2016, p. 5; Dutt et al, 2025, pp. 47-49), references to which recur throughout the installation’s action. They are reflected too in the microcosmic approach of the exhibition, which treats the structure of the British Pavilion as the locus for representing hundreds of years of sprawling world historical events.

The work similarly juxtaposes historical influence and referents in its material construction. In conversation with the podcast *Talk Art* immediately following the exhibition’s launch,

već kao oblik remedijacije putem brikolaža i ispitivanja. Međusobna artikulacija slika i zvuka u ovom kontekstu proizvodi osjećaj misterija – dijelom zato što su neke od tih slika jednostavno upitnici na običnoj pozadini, ali i zbog njezina pristupa semantici. Prevladavajući zvuk je onaj tutnjave, nadiruće vode različitih kvaliteta kroz cijelu izložbu, suprotstavljen zvukovima koji proizlaze iz pomorskih i industrijskih procesa te zvonjavi zvona, uz povremeno odjekivanje muzičkih fragmenata kao i sekvenci govora izvučenih iz arhivskih materijala.

Obuhvaćajući vizualnu umjetnost ranog modernog doba do modernog ratovanja, referencijalni opseg instalacije obuhvaća katastrofu redovitih poplava u Bangladešu od 1980-ih, rad američke konzervatorice Rachel Carson, ustanke, imperijalne represije i borbe za neovisnost u Keniji, DR Kongu i Nigeriji, podjelu Indije i postimperijalnu obnovu, ekološke katastrofe zbog ratova u Koreji i Vijetnamu te utjecaj kolonijalnog nasilja na domorodačko stanovništvo u Kanadi i Kolumbiji (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). Unutar Velike Britanije instalacija „repozicionira narative generacije Windrush“, priziva policijsku agresiju prema britansko-nigerijskom Davidu Oluwaleu u yorkshireskom gradu Leedsu 1960-ih i Oluwaleovu konačnu smrt utapanjem kao pokazatelj „diskriminacije s kojom su se migranti u Britaniji suočavali u kontekstu postindustrijskog propadanja zemlje“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). Tako su kroz *Listening All Night to the Rain* „životi i rad kulturnih i političkih ličnosti utkani u priče o ratovima, migracijama i seizmičkim trenucima u očuvanju našeg prirodnog svijeta, djelujući kao duhovi ili sablasti prošlosti koji se materijaliziraju u našoj sadašnjosti“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). Instalacija zrcali periodizaciju koju je uspostavio Immanuel Wallerstein, teoretičar kapitalizma kao „svjetskog sustava“, koji je tvrdio da „svijet u kojem sada živimo, moderan svjetski sustav, ima svoje podrijetlo u šesnaestom stoljeću. Taj se svjetski sustav tada nalazio u samo jednom dijelu globusa, prvenstveno u dijelovima Europe i Amerike. S vremenom se proširio na cijeli planet. On jest i oduvijek je bio svjetska ekonomija. On jest i oduvijek je bio kapitalistička svjetska ekonomija“ (Wallerstein, 2015, str. 56). Ova zapažanja o specifičanom geografskom podrijetlu, ali s totalizirajućim ekonomskim horizontom, upućuju na utemeljenost kapitalističkog razvoja na kolonijalnom nasilju i krađi (Sharpe, 2016, str. 5; Dutt i dr., 2025, str. 47–49), a reference na to ponavljaju se kroz čitavo djelovanje instalacije. A odražavaju se i u mikrokozmičkom pristupu izložbe koja strukturu Britanskog paviljona tretira kao mjesto predstavljanja stotina godina raštrkanih svjetskih povijesnih događaja.

Djelo na sličan način supostavlja povijesne utjecaje i referente u svojoj materijalnoj konstrukciji. U razgovoru s podcastom *Talk Art* neposredno nakon otvaranja izložbe kustosica izložbe Tarini Malik okarakterizirala je prostor i njegove logističke izazove kao one koji proizlaze iz „neoklasične zgrade iz devetnaestog stoljeća koja je u mnogo aspekata vjerojatno dizajnirana da prikazuje salonski postav slika“ (Burberry, 2024). Prema Akomfrah, projekt je angažirao desetljećima dug „interes za nacionalne identitete, ono što čini britanski identitet, što on isključuje ili pušta unutra“ (Burberry, 2024) kako bi odgovorio na prostor paviljona i prepreke i mogućnosti koje taj prostor arhitektonski predstavlja. Akomfrah je inzistirao na pristupu podrumu Britanskog paviljona, koji je prije toga koristio samo Mike Nelson 2011. godine, kako bi izbjegao ulazak u zgradu preko njezina velika neoklasičnog portika i proizveo „specifičnu vrstu logike ‘gore/dolje’ na kojoj izložba počiva“ (Burberry, 2024), koristeći ovdje prostornu metaforu koja priziva klasne odnose. Tumačeći prezentaciju digitalnih zaslona kao „skulpturalne konstelacije“, Malik je primijetila da su „strukture u kojima se nalaze ovi zasloni zapravo inspirirane oltarnim palama“ (Burberry, 2024). U procesu pripremnih radova za izložbu s Jessicom Reynolds iz vPPR-a („arhitektonskog ureda koji vode žene“) (Practice, 2025) opisala je kako se nalazila u „potpunom vrtlogu traženja gotičkih i renesansnih crkava i tih različitih vrsta panela kako bi razmišljala o tome kako slike stoje jedna uz drugu“, pri

the exhibition's curator Tarini Malik characterised the space and its logistical challenges as those arising from "a neoclassical nineteenth century building that in many ways is probably designed to show a salon hang of paintings" (Burberry, 2024). For Akomfrah himself, the project engaged a decades-long "interest in national identities, what constitutes a British one, what that shuts out or lets in" (Burberry, 2024) in a response to the pavilion space and the obstructions and possibilities it presented architecturally. Akomfrah insisted on access to the British Pavilion's basement, used only once before by Mike Nelson in 2011, to circumvent entry to the building via its grand neoclassical portico, and to produce "a kind of upstairs/downstairs logic to the way the show worked" (Burberry, 2024), here using a spatial metaphor which invokes class relations. Framing the cantos' presentation of digital screens as "sculptural constellations", Malik noted that "the structures that are housing these screens are actually inspired by altarpieces" (Burberry, 2024). In the process of preparatory work towards the exhibition with Jessica Reynolds from vPPR ("a women-led architecture practice") (Practice, 2025), she described being in "a complete vortex of looking up Gothic and Renaissance churches and these different kinds of panels to think about how images sit alongside each other", where Akomfrah's aim was to rearticulate the exhibitionary environment "to create spaces that extend and expand this idea of contemplation and reverie" (Burberry, 2024). Presented on these screens, which thus also weave a subtle reference to the function of organised religion for colonialism into the exhibition's offering, the films produced for the interconnected rooms of the building were rigorously planned and structured to run to exactly 30 minutes, each playing on a loop, and finishing simultaneously. This decision enabled artist and curator "to gauge how sound is working, the rhythms of things and whether they're talking to each other or not [...] what you're seeing is the product of a certain kind of precision but also freedom" (Burberry, 2024). Of the audience's interaction with the work in this context, Akomfrah proposed that he was "happy to let people wander in and do what they like with it, but within certain constraints" (Burberry, 2024).

Attention

Let's turn now to the larger question of spectatorial attention in the context of contemporary capitalist culture – the scenario within which *Listening All Night to the Rain* makes its intervention. *Scorched Earth: Beyond the Digital Age to a Post-Capitalist World*, a recent text by art historian Jonathan Crary, is a short polemic addressing the inter-articulation of the capitalist system, environmental destruction, and what he calls the "internet complex": to restate his definition, an entity "inseparable from the immense, incalculable scope of 24/7 capitalism and its frenzy of accumulation, extraction, circulation, production, transport, and construction, on a global scale" (Crary, 2022, p. 6). Arguing that with the internet, the world has witnessed the realisation of Marx's mid-nineteenth century prediction of a "global market", he insists that this complex is "now the comprehensive global apparatus for the dissolution of society", and that "the temporalities and values of an on-demand world are unliveable and the appetites incited terminally insatiable" (2022, pp. 10, 20). Fellow art historian Claire Bishop takes Crary's argument up ambivalently in her own recent book *Disordered Attention: How We Look At Art and Performance Today*, an account of how the emergence and entrenchment of digital technologies have "reorganised" (Bishop, 2024, p. 7) the manner in which audiences attend to art. For Bishop, what she calls "normative attention" (2024, pp. 9-15) has been made redundant by the proliferation of digital technologies. She proposes normative attention to be historically predicated on the nineteenth century emergence of "conscious, rational, and disciplined" subjectivity that is "paradigmatically white, patriarchal, bourgeois, colonial"

čemu je Akomfrahov cilj bio reartikulirati izložbeno okruženje „kako bi stvorio prostore koji proširuju i šire ovu ideju kontemplacije i sanjarenja“ (Burberry, 2024). Predstavljajući na tim zaslonima, koji tako u izložbeni materijal utkivaju i suptilnu referencu na funkciju organizirane religije za kolonijalizam, filmovi producirani za međusobno povezane prostorije zgrade bili su rigorozno planirani i strukturirani da traju točno 30 minuta, pri čemu se svaki vrti u *loopu* i završava istovremeno. Ova odluka omogućila je umjetniku i kustosici „da procijene kako zvuk funkcionira, zatim ritmove stvari i komuniciraju li jedni s drugima ili ne [...] ono što vidite je proizvod određene vrste preciznosti, ali i slobode“ (Burberry, 2024). O interakciji publike s radom u ovom kontekstu Akomfrah je naznačio da je „sretan što omogućuje ljudima da zalutaju unutra i rade s tim što god žele, ali unutar određenih ograničenja“ (Burberry, 2024).

Pažnja

Okrenimo se sada širem pitanju gledateljske pažnje u kontekstu suvremene kapitalističke kulture – scenariju unutar kojeg *Listening All Night to the Rain* obavlja svoju intervenciju. *Scorched Earth: Beyond the Digital Age to a Post-Capitalist World*, tekst povjesničara umjetnosti Jonathana Craryja kratka je polemika koja se bavi uzajamnim artikulacijama kapitalističkog sustava, uništavanja okoliša i onoga što on naziva „internetskim kompleksom“; da ponovimo njegovu definiciju, entitetom „neodvojivim od neizmjernog, neprocjenjivog dosega sveprisutnog kapitalizma i njegove mahovitosti akumulacije, ekstrakcije, cirkulacije, proizvodnje, transporta i gradnje na globalnoj razini“ (Crary, 2022, str. 6). Tvrdi da je s internetom svijet svjedočio realizaciji Marxova predviđanja o „globalnom tržištu“ iz sredine devetnaestog stoljeća, on inzistira na tome da je taj kompleks „sada sveobuhvatni globalni aparat za rastakanje društva“ te da su „temporalnosti i vrijednosti svijeta-na-zahtjev neizdržive, a potaknuti apetiti terminalno nezasićeni“ (2022, str. 10, 20). Kolegica, povjesničarka umjetnosti Claire Bishop ambivalentno preuzima Craryjev argument u svojoj nedavnoj knjizi *Disordered Attention: How We Look at Art and Performance Today* (2024), osvrćući na to kako su pojava i utvrđivanje digitalnih tehnologija „reorganizirali“ (Bishop, 2024, str. 7) način na koji publika posvećuje pažnju umjetnosti. Za Bishop, ono što ona naziva „normativnom pažnjom“ (2024, str. 9–15) postalo je suviše zbog proliferacije digitalnih tehnologija. Ona tvrdi da je normativna pažnja povijesno utemeljena na pojavi „svjesnog, racionalnog i discipliniranog“ subjektiviteta u devetnaestom stoljeću koji je „paradigmatski bijel, patrijarhalan, buržoaski, kolonijalan“ (2024, str. 10). Galerijski i kazališni prostori u tom su razdoblju konstruirali „normativnu pažnju“, potičući blizak, jednosmjerni fokus prema odabranom umjetničkom objektu ili spektaklu. Pametni telefoni, i trenutačni digitalni pristup koji oni omogućuju, redefiniraju pažnju kao hibridnu stvar koja uključuje kognitivno kretanje između platformi.

Kao što prenosi *Disordered Attention*, danas bi posjetitelj galerije opremljen pametnim telefonom mogao gledati umjetničko djelo, fotografirati ili snimati video, komunicirati s nekim preko aplikacija o umjetničkom djelu, objavljivati o tome na internetu, možda biti uvučen u druge informacije na mreži, nastaviti angažman s umjetničkim događajem itd., navigirajući tako višestrukim ravnima pažnje dostupnima istovremeno. Iako je takva praksa bila još nedavno zabranjena, Bishop primjećuje da galerije i muzeji sada aktivno potiču posjetitelje da dokumentiraju umjetnička djela koja vide i da dijele slike na internetu. Ona tvrdi da su dramaturška organizacija temporalnosti i iskustvo publike uvjetovano ritmovima digitalnog pristupa pronašli put u estetsko oblikovanje samih umjetničkih djela – bilo u smislu opsega informacija predstavljenih publici, bilo u kuriranju i prezentaciji koincidentnih događaja i praksi. Sukladno tome, ona nudi shemu pažnje, navodeći vrste projekata koji na razne načine potiču „prelijetanje i

(2024, p. 10). Gallery and theatre spaces in that period constructed 'normative attention' by encouraging close, unidirectional focus towards a chosen art object or spectacle. Smartphones and the instantaneous digital access they enable remake attention as a hybrid affair, involving cognitive movement between platforms.

As *Disordered Attention* conveys, nowadays a gallery attendee equipped with a smartphone might look at an artwork, take pictures or video, communicate with someone via digital means about the artwork, post online about it, perhaps become drawn in to other information online, resume engagement with the art event, and so on, thus navigating the multiple planes of attention available simultaneously. Prohibited even in relatively recent times, Bishop notes that galleries and museums now actively encourage attendees to document the artworks that they see and to circulate images online. And she argues that the dramaturgical arrangement of temporality and spectatorial experience conditioned by the rhythms of digital access have found their way into the aesthetic formation of artworks themselves – whether in terms of the volume of information presented to audiences for their reception, or in the curation and presentation of coincident events and practices. Accordingly, she offers an attentional schema by accounting for types of projects which encourage, variously, “skimming and sampling; hybrid/social spectatorship; viral/S curve; scrolling” (2024, p. 32). She is keen to disrupt the moral valences of “distraction” as spectatorial failure or indulgence (2024, p. 16). As diagnosis, Bishop’s critique specifies these changed conditions of spectatorship, and resonates with Ingvarsson’s proposal regarding the relation between digital epistemology and a “multidimensional and media archaeological approach to culture” (Ingvarsson, 2021, p. 21). But not only that: Bishop’s is an accommodation to, if not an active embrace of these changed spectatorial conditions. Figuring ‘normative attention’ as at least to some degree a disciplinary force, for Bishop the scenario of ‘re-organised attention’ promises alternative perceptual possibilities currently foreclosed in even radical cultural critique. Of Tina Campt’s approach in *A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See* (2021) to the relation between art, artist and spectator as “a slow ethics of care”, for example, she writes that Campt’s “concept of care is powerfully reparative. At the same time, it leaves me uneasy. I don’t find myself turning to art for care or to be cared for (there’s enough of that already in my life). It shifts the discussion to ethics away from politics. It also returns us to the depth model of a fully present beholder” – contending that, with Michael Fried before her, Campt favours “a type of work that is unitary and graspable” (Bishop, 2024, pp. 23-24).

Setting aside Bishop’s dismissal of art as a vehicle for processing or even a substitute for attachment – a theme brilliantly addressed by Andrew Asibong from a film studies perspective in *Post-Traumatic Attachments to the Eerily Moving Image: Something to Watch Over Me* (2021) – her account of these transformations seems somewhat deterministic. It by no means follows that absorptive contemplation consists only in masculinist possession and “optical mastery” (Bishop, 2024, p. 10) nor that such contemplation can’t be exercised in response to works which engage with the sensorial diffusions of digital culture.² By coincidence, Campt’s writing is also threaded into *Listening All Night to the Rain*: a quotation from the introduction of *Listening to Images: an Exercise in Counterintuition*, inscribed in gold on crimson above a door within the

2 In a recent text for British theatre magazine *Exeunt* about spectatorship and neurodivergence, for example, Daisy Buchanan reflects on the beneficial introduction of relaxed performances in theatre, but also notes “sometimes I wish there was also an ‘ultra focused’ performance, for people like me, whose autism manifests as need for stillness and quiet from everyone but the actors” (2025).

uzorkovanje; hibridno/kolektivno gledanje; viralni rast/S-krivulju; skrolanje“ (2024, str. 32). Želi razbiti moralno prokazivanje „rastresenosti“ kao gledateljskog neuspjeha ili povlađivanje samima sebi (2024, str. 16). Kao dijagnoza, Bishopina kritika specificira ove izmijenjene uvjete gledanja i rezonira s Ingvarssonovim prijedlogom o odnosu između digitalne epistemologije i „multidimenzionalnog i medijsko-arheološkog pristupa kulturi“ (Ingvarsson, 2021, str. 21). Ali ne samo to: njezino je stajalište prilagodba, ako ne i aktivno prihvaćanje tih promijenjenih gledateljskih uvjeta. Prikazujući „normativnu pažnju“ barem u određenoj mjeri kao disciplinsku silu, za Bishop scenarij „reorganizirane pažnje“ obećava alternativne perceptivne mogućnosti koje su trenutačno izvan horizonta čak i radikalne kulturne kritike. O pristupu Tine Campt u knjizi *A Black Gaze: Artists Changing How We See* iz 2021. ili odnosu između umjetnosti, umjetnika i gledatelja kao „polaganoj etici skrbi“, naprimjer, Bishop piše da je Camptin „koncept skrbi snažno reparativan. Istovremeno me čini nespokojnom. Ne posežem za umjetnošću radi skrbi ili da se o meni brine (toga imam već dovoljno u životu). To pomiče raspravu dalje od politike, prema etici. Također nas vraća modelu dubine potpuno prisutnog promatrača – tvrdeći da, kao i Michael Fried prije nje, Campt favorizira „vrstu rada koja je jedinstvena i dokučiva“ (Bishop, 2024, str. 23–24).

Ostavljajući po strani Bishopino odbacivanje umjetnosti kao sredstva za procesuiranje ili čak zamjene za privrženost – što je tema kojom se briljantno bavi Andrew Asibong iz perspektive filmske teorije u *Post-Traumatic Attachments to the Eerily Moving Image: Something to Watch Over Me* (2021) – njezin prikaz tih transformacija čini se pomalo determinističkim. Nipošto ne slijedi da se apsorbirana kontemplacija sastoji samo od maskulinističkog posjedovanja i „optičkog majstorstva“ (Bishop, 2024, str. 10) niti da se takva kontemplacija ne može vježbati u odgovoru na djela koja se bave osjetilnim difuzijama digitalne kulture.² Igrum slučaja, pisanje Campt je također utkano u *Listening All Night to the Rain*: citat iz uvoda djela *Listening to Images: an Exercise in Counterintuition* ispisan je zlatom na grimiznoj podlozi iznad vrata unutar izložbe i glasi „...slušanje slika konstituirano je kao praksa gledanja izvan onoga što vidimo i usklađivanja naših osjetila s drugim afektivnim frekvencijama...“ (Campt, 2017, str. 9). U svojoj knjizi Campt primjenjuje ovu metodu na etnografsko te fotografiranje za identifikacijske dokumente, u projektu koji „vraća fotografski arhiv nesigurnih i izvlaštenih crnih subjekata u devetnaestom, dvadesetom i dvadeset prvom stoljeću, posvećujući pažnju tihim, ali rezonantnim frekvencijama slika koje su povijesno bile odbačene i zanemarene“ (2017, str. 11). U kontekstu djela *Listening All Night to the Rain* citat vjerojatno istovremeno upućuje na umjetnikov vlastiti pristup radu s arhivskim materijalima i služi kao preporuka publici izložbe. Kao što ću ubrzo pokazati, Akomfrahovu bi izložbu bilo vrlo teško okarakterizirati kao „jedinstvenu i dokučivu“ (Bishop, 2024, str. 24); u određenom smislu ona nudi vrstu „preopterećenja informacijama“ pogodnu za „prelijetanje i uzorkovanje“ (2024, str. 29). Ipak, ona sadrži i Camptinu metodološku preporuku za vježbanje bliske, višeosjetilne pažnje. Bishopino inzistiranje da je „sviđalo nam se to ili ne, hibridna pažnja ‘OSXXI’, operativni sustav gledateljstva u dvadeset prvom stoljeću“ (2024, str. 29) spaja informacijsku tehnologiju i gledateljstvo. To pokazuje da ona i Crary pišu s temeljno različitim stajališta o budućnosti interneta i njegovu odnosu prema klimatskoj katastrofi. Priznajući da je Crary „u pravu, internetski kompleks jest ekološki ekocidan“ (2024, str. 29), ona ga ipak prihvaća kao „novo normalno“, možda zbog cilja knjige da se „riješi ekonomskog uokvirivanja pažnje“ (2024, str. 29). U međuvremenu Crary svoju polemiku zaključuje zbuđenju. „Izvanredno je“, piše on, „da se u trenutku neviđene opasnosti

2 U nedavnom tekstu za britanski kazališni časopis *Exeunt* o gledateljstvu i neurodivergentnosti, naprimjer, Daisy Buchanan promišlja o korisnom uvođenju opuštenih izvedbi (*relaxed performances*) u kazalište, ali također primjećuje: „ponekad poželim da postoji i ultra-fokusirana izvedba, za ljude poput mene čiji se autizam manifestira kao potreba za nepomičnošću i tišinom svih prisutnih osim glumaca“ (2025).

exhibition, which reads "...listening to images is constituted as a practice of looking beyond what we see and attuning our senses to the other affective frequencies..." (Campt, 2017, p. 9). In her book, Campt applies this method to state identification and ethnographic photography, in a project which "reclaims the photographic archive of precarious and dispossessed black subjects in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries by attending to the quiet but resonant frequencies of images that have been historically dismissed and disregarded" (2017, p.11). For *Listening All Night to the Rain*, the quotation arguably both points toward the artist's own approach to working with archival materials, and acts as a recommendation to audiences of the exhibition. As I will shortly show, Akomfrah's exhibition would be very difficult to characterise as "unitary and graspable" (Bishop, 2024, p. 24) and in a sense offers the kind of "information overload" conducive to "skimming and sampling" (2024, p 29). Yet it also bears this methodological recommendation from Campt for the exercise of close, multisensorial attentiveness. Bishop's insistence that "whether we like it or not, hybrid attention is 'OSXXI', the operating system of spectatorship in the twenty-first century" (2024, p. 29) conflates information technology and spectatorship. It suggests that she and Crary are writing from fundamentally different standpoints concerning the future of the internet and its relationship to climate catastrophe. While acknowledging that Crary "is right, the internet complex is environmentally ecocidal" (2024, p. 29), she nonetheless accepts it as the 'new normal', perhaps owing to the book's aim "to dispense with attention's economic framing" (2024, p. 29). Meanwhile, Crary concludes his polemic with bewilderment. "It is remarkable", he writes, "that at a moment of unparalleled danger for the future of the planet, for the very survival of human and animal life, that so many people should voluntarily confine themselves in the desiccated digital closets devised by a handful of sociocidal corporations" (Crary, 2022, p. 73) – an observation itself less alive to the crucial force of ideology in constructing social conditions than it might be.

In his 2019 Netflix special, *Asian Comedian Destroys America!* comedian Ronny Chieng offers a sharp analysis of precisely that, talking about consumerism and the relation between digital and domestic environments in a three-minute bit, extracted and presented as a teaser entitled 'Ronny Chieng Thinks Amazon Prime Is Too Slow' on the Netflix is a Joke YouTube account. "In America", he begins, "never leave your house. Land of the free, and land of never leaving your house. No item too trivial, no quantity too small, to be hand-delivered into your home like an emperor!" (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020). The routine presents the absurdity of "50 million boxes flying across America at all times" and thunders:

We need Prime harder, faster, stronger! Faster Prime. Prime Now! Prime Now. Two hour delivery! Prime now. Give it to me. Now. When I press buy, put the item in my hand. Now. In America there should be no lag, zero lag, between when I press the button, and the item is gently placed into my hand, so I can use it. Now (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020).

On the stage of the 1,400 capacity Alex Theater in Glendale California, clad in a tuxedo with luxuriantly ruched red velvet curtains as backdrop, Chieng speculates that the logical endpoint of convenience is "Prime Before. Send it to me before I want it! It's 2019, I have to make a decision before you mail me what I buy? Use artificial intelligence, to substitute my own intelligence, so I can live my life!" (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020). With laser comedic precision, *Asian Comedian Destroys America!* draws attention to the economic, structural and domestic underpinnings of digitally powered consumerism, which proffer a sense of sovereignty while inviting people to abandon forms of agency, modelling desire, attitudes to time, speed and attention, and ghosted by surveillance. This special

ET AL.

Louise Owen: 'WILL-TO-KNOW': CULTURAL RECKONING WITH CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

ET AL.

Louise Owen: VOLJA ZA ZNANJEM: KULTURNO SUOČAVANJE S KLIMATSKOM KATASTROFOM

za budućnost planeta, za sam opstanak ljudskog i životinjskog života, toliko ljudi dobrovoljno zatvara u isušene digitalne ormare koje je osmislila nekolicina sociocidnih korporacija" (Crary, 2022, str 73) – što je zapažanje koje je samo po sebi manje svjesno ključne snage ideologije u konstrukciji društvenih uvjeta nego što bi moglo biti.

U Netflixovu specijalu iz 2019., *Asian Comedian Destroys America!*, komičar Ronny Chieng nudi oštru analizu upravo toga, govoreći o konzumerizmu i odnosu između digitalnog i kućnog okruženja u trominutnom dijelu, izvučenom i predstavljenom kao najava pod naslovom „Ronny Chieng misli da je Amazon Prime prespor“ na YouTube računom *Netflix is a Joke*. „U Americi“, počinje on, „nikada ne izlazite iz kuće. Zemlja slobodnih i zemlja ne-izlaza-iz-kuće. Ni jedan predmet nije previše trivijalan, ni jedna količina premala da vam ne bi bila ručno dostavljena u dom kao caru!“ (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020). Rutina prikazuje apsurdnost „50 milijuna kutija koje u svakom trenutku lete diljem Amerike“ i grmi:

Trebamo Prime jače, brže, snažnije! Brži Prime. Prime odmah! Prime odmah. Dostava od dva sata! Prime odmah. Daj mi to. Odmah. Kad pritisnem 'kupi', stavi mi predmet u ruku. Odmah. U Americi ne bi trebalo biti kašnjenja, nula kašnjenja, između trenutka kada pritisnem gumb i trenutka kada mi se predmet nježno položi u ruku kako bih ga mogao koristiti. Odmah (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020).

Na pozornici kazališta Alex, kapaciteta 1400 mjesta u Glendaleu u Kaliforniji, odjeven u smoking s raskošno naboranim crvenim baršunastim zavjesama kao pozadinom, Chieng spekulira da je logična krajnja točka praktičnosti „Prime Before. Pošalji mi to prije nego što to poželim! Godina je 2019. i ja moram donijeti odluku prije nego što mi pošaljete ono što kupim? Koristite umjetnu inteligenciju da zamijenite moju vlastitu inteligenciju, kako bih mogao živjeti svoj život!“ (Netflix Is a Joke, 2020). Laserskom komičarskom preciznošću *Asian Comedian Destroys America!* skreće pažnju na ekonomske, strukturne i domaćinske temelje digitalno pokretanog konzumerizma koji nude osjećaj suvereniteta dok istovremeno pozivaju ljude da odustanu od vlastitog djelovanja, modelirajući želju, stavove prema vremenu, brzini i pažnji, a sve to u sjeni nadzora. Ovaj specijal završen je i emitiran znatno prije izbijanja pandemije COVID-19, koja je dodatno pogoršala povlačenje u domove i pribjegavanje pružanju digitalnih usluga koje on opisuje. Postoje brojne društvene koristi od digitalne infrastrukture, osobito pristup bitnim uslugama koji nudi, uključujući kulturna iskustva, osobama s invaliditetom, što smo i otkrili tijekom pandemijskih zatvaranja i kulturnih odgovora na to (Lepley, 2021). I kao što Crary primjećuje, kritizirati digitalnu društvenost ne znači fetišizirati osobnu „uživost“ iz „nekog pogrešnog osjećaja njezine autentičnosti“ (2022, str. 6). Stvar je strukturne naravi: digitalna infrastruktura i poslovanja kako su trenutačno konfigurirani te društveno djelovanje koje potiču, suštinski su usmjereni na akumulaciju kapitala. Što se tiče diferencijalnog pristupa bogatstvu i utjecaja na okoliš onih koji su na čelu takvih poslova, DeLay podsjeća čitatelje da su 2021. „Jeff Bezos i Richard Branson lansirali sebe u svemir na raketama koje emitiraju jednako po putniku kao što bilo tko od najsiromašnije milijarde emitira u cijelom životu“ (2024, str. 9).

Prebacimo se u Veneciju krajem lipnja 2025: na temelju intersekcionalne problematike „društvene i klimatske nepravde“ (Giuffrida, 2025) aktivističke skupine prosvjedovale su protiv Bezosove raskošne trodnevne svadbene proslave u gradu. Kako bi prisustvovala svečanosti, slavne osobe iz svijeta zabave, politike i biznisa doletjele su privatnim zrakoplovima, posluživane su na privatnim jahtama i čuvalo ih je privatno osiguranje (Heuvel, 2025). Nekoliko prosvjednih akcija kao odgovor na to iskoristilo je Veneciju kao scenu turističkog spektakla: plan blokiranja gradskih plovnih putova krokodilima na napuhavanje (kasnije povučen), transparenti izvješeni na znamenitostima poput mosta

was completed and broadcast well before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has compounded the retreat into the home and recourse to digital service provision that it describes. There are numerous social benefits to digital infrastructure, most particularly the access it offers to essential services, including cultural experiences, for people with disabilities, as the pandemic lockdowns and cultural responses to them revealed (Lepley, 2021). And as Cray notes, to critique digital sociality is not to fetishise in-person 'liveness' out of "some misplaced sense of its authenticity" (2022, p. 6). The point is a structural one: digital infrastructure and businesses as they are currently configured and the social action that they encourage are fundamentally geared towards capital accumulation. Concerning the differential access to wealth and environmental impacts on the part of those at the helm of such businesses, DeLay reminds the reader that in 2021 "Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson launched themselves into space on rockets emitting as much per passenger as anyone from the poorest billion emits in an entire lifetime" (2024, p. 9).

Moving now towards Venice, at the end of June 2025, on the basis of the intersectional matter of "social and climate injustice" (Giuffrida, 2025), activist groups protested Bezos' lavish three-day marriage celebration in the city. To attend, figures of celebrity in entertainment, politics and business were flown in by private jet, catered to on private yachts, and guarded by private security (Heuvel, 2025). Several protest actions in response drew on Venice as a scene of tourist spectacle: a plan to obstruct the city's waterways with inflatable crocodiles (later withdrawn), banners draped on landmarks like the Rialto Bridge, images digitally projected onto historic buildings, and finally a march through the city (Rainsford, 2025). Of the reasoning for the actions, Greenpeace Italia's Simona Abbata argued that the wedding wasn't "just a celebration of two people getting married, it's a display of a lifestyle that's simply unsustainable. The richest live in excess, while others endure the consequences of a climate emergency they didn't create" (Rainsford & Ghiglione, 2025). One of the most widely circulated images of the protest actions showed a huge square fabric banner secured to the ground in the centre of the Piazza San Marco, emblazoned with Bezos' image and the statement in English: "If you can rent Venice for your wedding you can pay more tax". Best seen from an aerial perspective, the banner co-opted promotional techniques now routinely used in Venice's cityscape by global fashion and communications brands. Since 2008, city authorities have sold advertising space on building restoration scaffolding to brands as a fundraising mechanism. Gigantic billboards secured to Venice's most prominent architectural sites have since generated controversy internationally for "violating' historic buildings", "the abuse of Venice as a 'cash cow'" and "short-term opportunism" (Hughes, 2021). Horrified by the Coca Cola and Bulgari ads which then enveloped the Bridge of Sighs, in 2010 artworld figures decried the billboards' scale and disruptive nocturnal illumination in an open letter to *The Art Newspaper*, an intervention which failed to arrest their subsequent proliferation (Kington, 2010). These billboards are especially amenable to digital image capture by virtue of the fabric from which they are constructed. In photographs taken of historic sites, the advertising images appended to them will compete with if not dominate the built environment, an effect leveraged in the case of the Piazza San Marco protest for activist means.

Rialto, slike digitalno projicirane na povijesne zgrade i na kraju marš kroz grad (Rainsford, 2025). Obrazlažući razloge za akcije, Simona Abbata iz talijanskoga Greenpeacea tvrdila je da vjenčanje nije bilo „samo proslava dvoje ljudi koji se vjenčaju, to je prikaz stila života koji je jednostavno neodrživ. Najbogatiji žive u neumjerenosti, dok drugi trpe posljedice klimatske izvanredne situacije koju nisu sami stvorili“ (Rainsford i Ghiglione, 2025). Jedna od najčešće dijeljenih slika prosvjednih akcija prikazivala je golem četvrtasti platneni transparent pričvršćen za tlo posred Trga svetog Marka, na kojem je bio otisnut Bezosov lik i izjava na engleskom jeziku: „Ako možeš unajmiti Veneciju za svoje vjenčanje, možeš platiti i više poreza“. Najbolje vidljiv iz ptičje perspektive, transparent je prisvojio promotivne tehnike koje globalni modni i komunikacijski brendovi sada rutinski koriste u venecijanskom gradskom pejzažu. Od 2008. godine gradske vlasti prodaju brendovima oglasni prostor na skelama za obnovu zgrada kao model prikupljanja sredstava. Gigantski plakati pričvršćeni na najistaknutija arhitektonska mjesta Venecije od tada izazivaju međunarodne kontroverze zbog „narušavanja' povijesnih zgrada“, „zlouporebe Venecije kao 'krave muzare'“ i „kratkoročnog oportunizma“ (Hughes, 2021). Zgroženi oglasima za Coca Colu i Bulgari koji su tada obavijali Most uzdaha, stručnjaci iz svijeta umjetnosti su 2010. godine u otvorenom pismu časopisu *The Art Newspaper* osudili razmjere plakata i njihovu ometajuću noćnu rasvjetu, što je bila intervencija koja nije uspjela zaustaviti njihovo daljnje bujanje (Kington, 2010). Ovi plakati, zahvaljujući tkanini od koje su izrađeni, posebno su pogodni za digitalno fotografiranje. Reklamne slike dodane na fotografije povijesnih mjesta natjecat će se s izgrađenim okolišem, ako ne i dominirati njime, što je efekt koji je u slučaju prosvjeda na Trgu svetog Marka iskorišten u aktivističke svrhe.

Kartografija

Primjer aktivističkog transparenta pričvršćenog za tlo na Trgu svetog Marka pokazuje da su digitalni aparati za reprezentaciju dali novo značenje interakciji s prostornim okruženjem na više načina. U Akomfrahovu djelu *Listening All Night to the Rain* konvergiraju svi do sada razmatrani problemi: klimatska katastrofa, procesi kognitivnog mapiranja i problem predstavljanja kapitalizma kao sustavnog totaliteta u umjetnosti te „internetski kompleks“ i njegov odnos prema „reorganiziranoj pažnji“ u umjetničkom gledateljstvu. *Listening All Night to the Rain* naručio je British Council za Britanski paviljon na Venecijanskom bijenalu 2024. Ponuda Bijenala sastoji se od nacionalnih paviljona i izložbi raspoređenih po gradu, uz dvije glavne lokacije: Giardini i Arsenale. Britanski paviljon nalazi se u Giardinima i pod nadzorom je British Councila od 1938. godine. Giardini je zeleni vrt uz more u kojem se nalazi izvorni velik paviljon Bijenala otvoren 1895., a danas i 30 drugih paviljona otvorenih tijekom 20. stoljeća; najnoviji je onaj Južne Koreje, otvoren 1995. Kako primjećuje povjesničar umjetnosti Joel Robinson, prvi paviljoni u Giardinima bili su oni „glavnih europskih sila, od kojih su mnoge već udomljavale vlastite velike izložbe te su stoga bile vrlo svjesne kapitala koji se može steći izgradnjom paviljona na ovakvim događanjima“: Belgija (1907.), Mađarska (1909.), Njemačka (1909.), Velika Britanija (1909.), Francuska (1912.) i Rusija (1914.) (Robinson, 2013, str. 20). Giardini su, dakle, poprište prepuno povijesti imperijalizma, osporavanih nacionalizama i konstrukta „imperijalnog internacionalizma“ (Robinson, 2013, str. 20–21). Umjetničke narudžbe predstavljene unutar Britanskog paviljona ambivalentno su uhvaćene u matrice moći; kako to kaže Stefania Portinari, prostor služi kao „diplomatski alat ili meka moć“ s vladinog stajališta, ali je također „dio borbe da se dade glas inovativnim umjetničkim oblicima i pridonese oblikovanju ideja o sadašnjosti kao i o budućnosti“ (Portinari, 2023, str. 113). Neposredno nakon otvaranja izložbe u travnju 2024., u razgovoru s voditeljima podcasta *Talk Art*, koji je sponzorirao Burberry, ključni korporativni sponzor izložbe, Akomfrah se

Cartography

The example of the activists' banner, secured to the ground in the Piazza San Marco, demonstrates that digital apparatuses for representation have reconstructed approaches to interacting with spatial environments in more ways than one. Within Akomfrah's *Listening All Night to the Rain*, the range of issues addressed in the discussion so far converge: climate catastrophe, processes of cognitive mapping and the problem of representing capitalism as systemic totality in art, and the 'internet complex' and its relation to 're-organised attention' in art spectatorship. *Listening All Night to the Rain* was commissioned by the British Council for the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2024. The Biennale's offerings comprise national pavilions and exhibitions distributed across the city alongside two main sites: the Giardini and the Arsenale. The British Pavilion is located in the Giardini and has been overseen by the British Council since 1938. The Giardini is a green garden adjacent to the sea, which houses the original large Biennale pavilion opened in 1895, and now 30 others launched throughout the 20th century – the most recent being South Korea, opened in 1995. As art historian Joel Robinson notes, the earliest pavilions in the Giardini were "those of Europe's chief powers, many of whom already hosted their own grand expositions, and were thus very aware of the capital to be gained by building pavilions at these kinds of events": Belgium (1907), Hungary (1909), Germany (1909), Great Britain (1909), France (1912), and Russia (1914) (Robinson, 2013, p. 20). The Giardini is thus a scene replete with histories of imperialism, contested nationalisms, and the construct of "imperial internationalism" (2013, pp. 20-21). The artistic commissions presented within the British Pavilion are caught ambivalently within matrices of power: as Stefania Portinari puts it, the venue serves as a "diplomatic tool or soft power" from a governmental standpoint, but is also "part of the struggle to give voice to innovative artforms and to contribute to shaping ideas about the present as well as the future" (Portinari, 2023, p. 113). In conversation with the hosts of *Talk Art* immediately after the exhibition's launch in April 2024 – an edition of the podcast sponsored by the exhibition's key corporate supporter Burberry – Akomfrah reflected on questions he had received about accepting the invitation to exhibit, hinting that these questions were impelled by such histories: "no, there's nothing wrong in being in the British Pavilion, in fact there's everything right in being a person of colour who's spent their lifetime challenging narratives about Britishness being asked to be in the British Pavilion, so I was very honoured to be asked" (Burberry, 2024).

Akomfrah began making work in the early 1980s as co-founder of the Black Audio Film Collective, and in 1998 founded Smoking Dogs Films with two fellow BAFC members, Lina Gopaul and David Lawson. Among the earliest BAFC projects were *Signs of Empire* (1983) ("an investigation into colonial fantasy") (Smoking Dog Films, 2012) and the Grierson Award-winning documentary *Handsworth Songs* (1986), which applied experimental essay film methods to explore the social consequences of racist policing. Over forty years, his extraordinary body of work has since pursued, as one critic puts it, "profound explorations into memory, post-colonialism, temporality and aesthetics" and "the experiences of migrant diasporas on a global scale" (Novi, 2024). His projects make consistent use of film, video and sound, but their inspirations and intellectual basis span philosophy, history, cinema, fine art, literature and poetry. In the *Talk Art* discussion, gallerist Robert Diament thus mused "I know we all know of you as an artist, but for me, when someone said what are you doing in Venice, I said I'm interviewing a poet" (Burberry, 2024). In reply, Akomfrah affirmed the importance of poetry in his life as an artist and his early creative aspirations, reflecting of *Listening All Night To The Rain* that

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osvrnuo na pitanja koja je dobivao o prihvaćanju poziva za izlaganje, nagovijestivši da su ta pitanja bila potaknuta upravo takvim povijestima: „ne, nema ničeg lošeg u tome da budete u Britanskom paviljonu; zapravo, posve je ispravno da se od osobe druge boje kože, koja je provela život izazivajući narative o britanstvu, traži da bude u Britanskom paviljonu, tako da mi je bila velika čast što sam pozvan“ (Burberry, 2024).

Akomfrah je počeo stvarati ranih 1980-ih kao suosnivač grupe *Black Audio Film Collective* (BAFC), a 1998. osnovao je *Smoking Dogs Films* s dvoje kolega iz BAFC-a, Linom Gopaul i Davidom Lawsonom. Među prvim projektima BAFC-a bili su *Signs of Empire* (1983.) („istraživanje kolonijalne fantazije“) (Smoking Dog Films, 2012) i dokumentarac *Handsworth Songs* (1986.), dobitnik nagrade Grierson, koji je primijenio metode eksperimentalnog filmskog eseja kako bi istražio društvene posljedice rasističkog djelovanja policije. Tijekom četrdeset godina djelovanja njegov izvanredan opus od tada teži, kako kaže jedan kritičar, „dubokim istraživanjima sjećanja, postkolonijalizma, temporalnosti i estetike“ te „iskustvima migrantskih dijaspora na globalnoj razini“ (Novi, 2024). Njegovi projekti dosljedno koriste film, video i zvuk, a inspirirani su i intelektualno utemeljeni na filozofiji, povijesti, kinematografiji, likovnoj umjetnosti, književnosti i poeziji. U raspravi na podcastu *Talk Art* gallerist Robert Diament napomenuo je: „Znam da te svi poznajemo kao vizualnog umjetnika, ali što se mene tiče, kad bi netko pitao što radiš u Veneciji, rekao bih da intervjuiram pjesnika“ (Burberry, 2024). Odgovarajući na to, Akomfrah je potvrdio važnost poezije u svom životu kao umjetnika i svoje rane kreativne težnje, napominjući za *Listening All Night to the Rain* da:

i naziv i metoda rada crpe inspiraciju od dva pjesnika. Su Dongpo, kineski pjesnik iz 11. stoljeća, dao nam je naslov jer je imao tu izvanrednu pjesmu za koju sam smatrao da sažima i ugođaj i metodu koju smo trebali prilagoditi za djelo. A drugi je Ezra Pound. Pound ovih dana nije baš popularan – očito je bio antisemit i pristaša nacista, točnije pristaša fašista. Ali napisao je jednu od najizvanrednijih knjiga poezije ikada. I metoda pjevanja (kanti), ta ideja da imate temu koju želite slijediti, ali je imate razbijenu u fragmente koji su međusobno povezani, koji se odnose jedni na druge koristeći trope ponavljanja i prisjećanja, bila je vrlo važna za naš rad na ovome (Burberry, 2024).

Primjena ove metode i njezino podrijetlo u djelu koje se bavi ulogom kolonijalnog nasilja u klimatskoj katastrofi uvodi daljnje metadiskurzivno obračunavanje u njegovu estetsku politiku. To također rezonira s Akomfrahovim zapažanjima u intervjuu za *The Art Newspaper* o njegovu pristupu samom zdanju Britanskog paviljona, avataru „imperijalne internacionale“, u kojem se „ovaj novi set međusobno povezanih djela nastoji nekako uvući u svaku pukotinu [britanskog] venecijanskog paviljona. Bavi se povijestima i pitanjima identiteta, ali ključno je da se bavi sjećanjem: mojim i tuđim“ (Buck, 2024).

O arhitektonskoj politici i odnosima moći koje artikuliraju Giardini Malik je primijetila da se Britanski paviljon uzdiže na vrhu avenije europskih kolonijalnih sila u Giardinima i također zauzima najvišu točku na samom otoku. Navela je da je Akomfrah „odmah znao da je njegov pristup gledati samo tkivo zgrade i razmotriti kako se ona može subvertirati, kako se može izazvati, ali i kako se kroz nju može stvoriti putovanje“ (Burberry, 2024). Obilaženje je zamišljeno tako da se publika kreće izvan, oko i kroz zgradu te njezine dvije razine, pri čemu svaki prostor predstavlja jedno pjevanje – *canto*. Počelo je ispred zgrade s Pjevanjem I, koje je predstavljalo kriptične slike satova zaglavljenih u tekućicama, arhivsku fotografiju i reference na slogane otpora, rasizma te „slike i glasove s Globalnog juga“ (British Digital Council Guide, 2024) diljem njezina neoklasičnog portika, prije nego što je prešlo u podrum na Pjevanje II. Pjevanje III zauzimalo je prostor oko stuba koje vode iz podruma. Pjevanja od IV do VIII kretala su

both the name and the working method draw their inspirations from two poets. Su Dongpo, a Chinese 11th century poet gave us the title, because he had this extraordinary poem that I thought summarised both the mood and the method that we needed to adapt for the piece. And the other is Ezra Pound. Now, Pound is not very popular these days – he was obviously an antisemite and a Nazi supporter, fascist supporter rather. But he did write one of the most extraordinary books of poetry ever. And the method of the cantos, this idea that you have a theme that you want to pursue but you have it broken up into fragments that are interlocked, that refer to each other using tropes of repetition and recall was very important for how we worked on this (Burberry, 2024).

The application of this method and its derivation in a work addressing the role of colonial violence in climate catastrophe introduces further metadiscursive reckoning in its aesthetic politics. It also resonates with Akomfrah's observations in an interview with *The Art Newspaper* about his approach to the edifice of the British Pavilion itself, an avatar of the 'imperial international', wherein "this new set of interconnected works seeks to somehow insinuate itself into every crevice of the [British] Venice pavilion. It is concerned with histories and with questions of identity, but crucially it is concerned with memory: mine and others" (Buck, 2024).

On the architectural politics and power relations articulated by the Giardini, Malik observed that the British Pavilion looms large at the top of the Giardini's avenue of European colonial powers and also occupies the highest point on the island as such. She reflected that Akomfrah "immediately knew that his approach was to look at the very fabric of the building, and consider how one can subvert, how one can challenge but also how one can create a journey through it" (Burberry, 2024). The journey was constructed to move outside, around and through the building and its two levels, with each space presenting a canto. It began outside the building with Canto I, which presented cryptic images of clocks lodged in running streams, archive photography, and reference to slogans of resistance, racism, and "imagery and voices from the Global South" (British Council Digital Guide, 2024) across its neoclassical portico, before segueing to the basement for Canto II. Canto III occupied the area surrounding the stairs leading up from the basement. Cantos IV to VIII moved like this: through two smaller atria, then to the largest room – producing an effect that Malik described in terms of "crescendo" – and finally two smaller atria. In sensorial terms, as I noted earlier, this curation meant that "both sound and the visual imagery can travel between the different spaces" (Burberry, 2024). Literary method and material design thus interacted to enable the pursuit of the installation's questions about historical memory. The entanglement between space, sound and narrative form was reiterated on the first exhibition rubric: located on the exterior of the building, it described how *Listening All Night to the Rain* "is conceived as a single landscape organised into song-like movements or 'cantos' that are inspired by American poet Ezra Pound's journey through history in 'The Cantos' (1925)" (British Council Digital Guide, 2024).

In September 2024, the British Pavilion was the first I attended within the Giardini. With limited time available for a visit to a single pavilion, I spent perhaps 45 minutes there altogether – moving from canto to canto absorbing the images and the accompanying sounds in an oceanic rush of information. First, I watched images and footage blink from Canto I. The six screens erected on the exterior of the building obscured parts of its neoclassical frontage, but in their sharp digital resolution they provided a surreal kind of visual depth, a moving collage. These were accompanied by sounds of water and

se na sljedeći način: kroz dva manja atrija do najveće prostorije – stvarajući učinak koji je Malik opisala kao „crescendo“ – i na kraju natrag kroz dva manja atrija. U osjetilnom smislu, kao što sam ranije napomenula, ovakvo kuriranje značilo je da „i zvuk i vizualne slike mogu putovati između različitih prostora“ (Burberry, 2024). Literarna metoda i materijalni dizajn uzajamno su djelovali kako bi u instalaciji omogućili bavljenjem pitanjima povijesnog sjećanja. Isprepletenost prostora, zvuka i narativne forme ponovljena je na prvom objašnjenju izložbe: smješteno na vanjskoj strani zgrade, ono opisuje kako je *Listening All Night to the Rain* „osmišljeno kao jedinstveni krajolik organiziran u stavke nalik pjesmama ili 'pjevanjima' koji su inspirirani putovanjem američkog pjesnika Ezre Pounda kroz povijest u djelu 'The Cantos' (1925)“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2024). U rujnu 2024. Britanski paviljon bio je prvi koji sam posjetila u Giardinima. Uz ograničeno vrijeme dostupno za posjet jednom paviljonu, tamo sam provela ukupno možda 45 minuta – krećući se od pjevanja do pjevanja, upijajući slike i prateće zvukove u oceanskom naletu informacija. Najprije sam gledala slike i snimke koje su treperile u Pjevanju I. Šest zaslona postavljenih na vanjskoj strani zgrade zaklanjalo je dijelove njezina neoklasičnog pročelja, ali su u svojoj oštroj digitalnoj rezoluciji pružali nadrealnu vrstu vizualne dubine, pokretni kolaž. Takvu kompoziciju pratili su zvukovi vode i drugi fragmenti zvuka koji su dopirali iz zvučnika u biljkama s objiju strana stuba, miješajući se s audioradovima koji su dopirali iz drugih susjednih paviljona. U kratku periodu koji sam tamo provela vidjela sam slike plave boje, satove u vodi, prateći kadar koji obuhvaća plažu s mladom ženom u crvenom.

Da bi se nastavilo, bilo je potrebno prošetati oko bočne strane zgrade, spustiti se niza stube i ući u podrum u suterenu, kroz malen prostor predvorja označen tamnoljubičastim zidom, na kojem je zlatnim slovima bio ispisan naslov umjetničkog djela i njegovi zaslužni autori. Ova kraljevska reprezentacijska shema odjekivala je unutar ponude Pjevanja II u susjednoj prostoriji. Niz malih zaslona bio je postavljen na stupovima i zidovima tako da ih je bilo nemoguće vidjeti sve odjednom. Apotekarske bočice, portreti crne djece odjevene u odjeću iz devetnaestog stoljeća, škarice koje leže na glazbenim partiturama i Holbeinovi pripremni crteži za portrete engleskog plemstva iz 16. stoljeća – sve je to bilo uronjeno u prozirni tok rijeke, usred zvukova nadiruće vode, brujanja kakvo bi moglo dopirati iz morskog plovila u pokretu i povremene zvonjave sata. U usporedbi s vanjskim, ovaj se prostor činio zatvorenim, čak pomalo klaustrofobičnim. Dok smo se penjali stubama u zagasito grimizni prostor, iznad nas je visjela začuđujuća kompozicija zastarjele audioopreme i magnetofonskih traka pričvršćenih za strop. To je bilo Pjevanje III: otok artefakata koji služi kao spremnik za rezonantni zvučni rad stvoren s grupom *Dubmorphology* (umjetnici Gary Stewart i Trevor Mathison) koji je reagirao na kretanje i zvukove posjetitelja. Ovdje sam čula fragmente arhivskih snimki – govore aktivista za građanska prava, ali i fašista – prije nego što sam skrenula udesno u sljedeću prostoriju. Nisam shvatila da sam krivo skrenula – to je zapravo bila posljednja prostorija, Pjevanje VIII. Sjela sam na klupu, podijeljenu na sjedala čvrstim pregradama, s još dvoje posjetitelja i pogledala rad u ovoj prostoriji u cijelosti. Film se prikazivao na još šest zaslona u tamnozelenom okruženju, raspoređenih u obliku koji sam kasnije protumačila kao analogan stablu, ali inspiriran, kako je Malik otkrila, konstrukcijama oltarnih pala. Počelo je scenom predjela koji su izgledali kao pustopoljine sjevernog Yorkshira iz različitih kutova – muškarac istočnoazijskog podrijetla srednjih godina sjedi na autobusnoj stanici, televizijski ekrani proizvedeni u različitim razdobljima neobično su smješteni jedan uz drugoga na vrhu brda na otvorenom, prikazujući snimku iz emisije s TV osobom i botaničarom koji mi je poznat iz djetinjstva. Ove su slike ustupile mjesto drugima: pojedincima u svijetlim kabanicama koji hodaju oko zgrada od suhozida, kadom punom ružičastih patkica kraj crnca u svijetloj kabanici, otvorenih očiju, polegnutnog na leđa na plavoj plahti, prije ponovnog prizora iz sela gdje je istočnoazijski muškarac sada koračao kroz jarko ružičastu maglu. Sve ove usporene videoslike i fotografije bile su

other snatches of sound issuing from speakers in the plants on either side of the steps, intermingling with the audio works emanating from other adjacent pavilions. In the short time I spent there, I saw images of blue, the clocks in water, a tracking shot taking in a beach featuring a young woman in red.

To proceed, it was necessary to walk around the side of the building, down some steps, and into the lower ground floor basement, through a small foyer area indicated by a wall of dark purple bearing the title of the artwork in gold and its credits. This regal representational scheme was echoed within the offering of Canto II in the next room. A sequence of small screens was presented on pillars and walls, impossible to see all at once. Apothecary bottles, portraits of Black children clad in nineteenth century garments, scissors sitting atop manuscript music, and Holbein's preparatory drawings for portraits of 16th century English nobility were all immersed in the transparent flow of a river, amid the sounds of rushing water, a groaning of the sort that might emanate from a maritime vessel in motion, and the occasional chime of a clock bell. Compared to the outside, the space felt enclosed, even slightly claustrophobic. Ascending the stairs into a deep crimson environment, hanging above was an extraordinary collocation of defunct audio equipment and reel-to-reel tape attached to the ceiling. This was Canto III: an island of artefacts serving as the container for a responsive sound work created with Dubmorphology (artists Gary Stewart and Trevor Mathison) that interacted with the movement and sounds of audience members. Here, I heard fragments of archive recording – speeches from civil rights activists, from fascists – before turning right into the next room.

Without realising it, I had taken a wrong turn: this was in fact the final room, Canto VIII. I sat on a bench divided into seats by solid partitions with two other audience members and watched the work in this room in full. The film played out on another six screens, in a dark green environment, arranged in a shape I later interpreted as analogous to a tree, but inspired, as Malik revealed, by altarpiece constructions. It began with a scene somewhere on what looked like the north Yorkshire moors from different vantage points – a middle aged east Asian man sitting at a bus stop, television screens manufactured in different periods uncannily adjacent on the hilltop in the open air, playing footage from a show featuring a TV personality and botanist familiar to me from childhood. These images ceded to others, of individuals in bright mackintoshes walking around dry stone buildings, of a bathtub filled with pink ducks sitting beside a Black man in the bright mackintosh lying supine, eyes open, on a blue sheet, before moving back to the countryside where the east Asian man was now walking amid bright pink mist. All of these slow motion video images and stills were distributed across the six digital screens, hinting at what was to come, what was past, what would be repeated, in the sequence being shared. They gave way similarly to archive footage, of east Asian children being sprayed with pesticides by members of the military, interspersed with images of bathtubs now filled with pink ducks, a photographic portrait of a young east Asian mother wading through water with her children in flight from war, images of war atrocities, a large boat encrusted with moss and filth. A close up of a middle aged white man standing in profile, wearing a cap, of an older east Asian woman standing in a green forest, of oblong sheets of brightly coloured red and yellow paper bearing question marks and exclamation marks, of red screens, of images of weeping, of faces of the people in the forest with expressions of blank contemplation – all were accompanied by a soundscape of birds, of chimes, of fierce wind blowing. Snatches of Billie Holiday singing the Depression-era jazz standard 'Pennies from Heaven' (1936) drifted in from another space. The sounds of helicopters resounded. The screens concluded back on

raspoređene na šest digitalnih zaslona, nagovještavajući ono što dolazi, što je prošlo, što će se ponoviti u nizu koji se dijeli. Te su slike potom ustupile mjesto arhivskim snimkama istočnoazijske djece koju pripadnici vojske prskaju pesticidima, isprepletenim slikama kâda, sada napunjenih ružičastim patkicama, fotografskom portretu mlade istočnoazijske majke koja gazi kroz vodu sa svojom djecom bježeći od rata, slikama ratnih zločina, velikom brodu prekrivenom mahovinom i prljavštinom. Krupni plan bijelca srednjih godina koji stoji u profilu i nosi kapu, starije istočnoazijske žene koja stoji u zelenoj šumi, duguljastih listova jarko crvenog i žutog papira s upitnicima i uskliknicima, crvenih ekrana, slika plakanja, lica ljudi u šumi s izrazima prazne kontemplacije – sve je to pratio zvučni krajolik ptica, zvona i žestoka vjetra koji puše. Isječci Billie Holiday koja pjeva jazz standard iz doba Velike depresije *Pennies from Heaven* (1936.) dopirali su iz drugog prostora. Odjekivali su zvukovi helikoptera. Ekranu su završili ponovno na pustopoljini s čovjekom koji sjedi na autobusnoj stanici, krupnim planom metronoma, blagovaonskim stolom skromno postavljenim za obrok, stolicama postavljenim kao da hodaju prema stolu. Ekranu su izbljedjeli u crno.

Trudila sam se dokučiti smisao onoga što sam vidjela, iznalazeći veze između spominjanja DDT-a u tekstu izložbe, fantastičnije ružičaste magle i ružičastih patkica, pitajući se o nitima povezanosti između ljudi na snimkama, nepomičnih fotografskih slika i ljudi postavljenih u scenu šume. Da sam prošla kroz osam pjevanja ispravnim redosljedom, vidjela bih – kao što sam vidjela prilikom svog drugog posjeta u studenom 2024. – da su uprizorene slike i snimke Akomrahova izvornog autorstva protkane kroz njih u jukstapoziciji s drugim arhivskim materijalom kako bi proizvele osjećaj unutarnjeg razgovora, odjeka, između svih njih. Instalacija predlaže oscilirajuće, nelinearne veze između povijesnih scena, nadrealno uprizorenih slika i zvuka, polako osvjetljavajući materijalne veze između imperijalnog nasilja i svakodnevnih iskustava, kulturnih institucija i modusa, pozicija ljudi uhvaćenih u tijeku vremena, povijesnih događaja koji se granaju, naziru kroz prostorije paviljona. Shvativši prekasno da sam krivo skrenula, vratila sam se kroz grimiznu prostoriju i provela nekoliko minuta u svakoj od preostale tri prostorije – najdulje u središnjoj prostoriji s klupama postavljenim uzduž zidova, a križ od klupa postavljen u sredini nudio je dodatnih osam površina za sjedenje u mraku. Na ekranu je portret Patricea Lumumbe bio zaglavljnjen između dviju grana drveta. Crno-bijele slike prosvjeda nakon Lumumbina ubojstva prikazivale su prosvjednike koji drže visoko podignute natpise: „LUMUMBINA DUŠA MARŠIRA DALJE“, „RUKE DALJE OD AFRIKE“. Starija bjelkinja u profilu gledala je preko mora. Naftna platforma stajala je ogoljena u oceanu. Ribe izvučene iz mora ležale su mrtve na ceradi. Nadzirao se gigantski brod natovaren kontejnerima. Druga starija bjelkinja i mlada crnkinja sjedile su jedna do druge na klupama u Nacionalnoj galeriji. Odjekivali su zvukovi vjetra, vode, kucanje metronoma i tonovi odsvirani na klaviru. Brzo sam prošla kroz posljednje pjevanje – zapravo Pjevanje IV – nakratko zastavši, registrirajući raspored ekrana, šum nadiruće vode i kretanje između platformi oceanskih plovila te pogled ispod površine mora.

Sljedećeg dana vratila sam se s prijateljima. Stojeći zajedno, gledali smo ekrane na vanjskoj strani zgrade koji su u trenutku našeg dolaska prikazivali fotografije policijske brutalnosti i otpora prema njoj, a fotografije koje smo gledali bile su uronjene, utopljene u vodu. Na jednom je transparentu pisalo „RUKE DALJE OD CRNACA“. Plakat na prosvjedu zahtijevao je „OSLOBODITE BROCKWELLSKU TROJKU“. Na jednoj fotografiji bio je prikazan crnac kojeg za vrat drži policajac s kacigom i vuče ga niz ulicu. Prisjećajući se onoga što sam vidjela prethodnog dana, osjećala sam se potresena time, shrvana razmjerom pothvata, golemom društvenom i kulturnom poviješću koju je nastojao prikazati. Vrativši se u studenom odlučila sam pristupiti djelu kao da sam u kinu, posvećujući pažnju svakom od pjevanja u cijelosti, od početka do kraja svakog 30-minutnog videa. Zahvaljujući višestrukim ekranima i njihovom rasporedu u svakoj

the moor with the man sitting at the bus stop, a close up on a metronome, a dining table set sparsely for a meal, chairs positioned as if they were walking towards the table. The screens faded to black.

I struggled to make sense of what I had seen, inferring links between references to DDT made on the rubric, the more fantastical pink mist, and the pink ducks, wondering about the threads of connection between the people in the footage, the still photographic images, and the people staged in the scene of the forest. Had I moved through the eight cantos in the correct order, I would have seen – as I saw on my second visit in November 2024 – that the staged images and footage of Akomfrah’s origination were threaded through them in juxtaposition with other archival material to produce a sense of internal conversation, of echo, between them all. The installation proposes oscillatory, non-linear connections between historical scenes, surreal staged images, and sound, slowly illuminating the material connections between imperial violence and everyday experiences, cultural institutions and modes, the positionalities of people caught in the flow of time, historical events sprawling, glimpsed across the pavilion’s rooms. Realising too late that I had made a wrong turn, I walked back through the crimson room and spent a few minutes in each of the remaining three rooms – the longest in the central room, where benches lined the walls, and a cross of benches arranged in the middle afforded a further eight surfaces on which to sit in the darkness. On screen, Patrice Lumumba’s portrait was wedged between two branches of a tree. Monochrome images of protests following Lumumba’s assassination showed demonstrators holding signs aloft: ‘LUMUMBA’S SOUL GOES MARCHING ON’, ‘HANDS OFF AFRICA’. An older white woman in profile looked out across the sea. An oil rig stood starkly in the ocean. Fish dragged from the sea lay dead on a tarpaulin. A gigantic ship loaded with shipping containers loomed. Another older white woman and a young Black woman sat adjacent to one another on benches in the National Gallery. Sounds of wind, water, a metronome ticking, and notes sounded on a piano reverberated. I passed quickly through the final canto – really Canto IV – standing briefly, registering the arrangement of the screens, the rushing sound of water, and the movement between the platforms of ocean vessels and a view from beneath the surface of the sea.

The next day, I returned with my friends. Standing together, watching the screens on the exterior of the building, which at the moment of our arrival bore photographs of police brutality and resistance to it, the photographs we were looking at were immersed, drowned, in water. A banner read ‘HANDS OFF BLACK PEOPLE’. A placard in a demo demanded ‘FREE THE BROCKWELL 3’. A photograph showed a Black man dragged through the street by the neck by a police officer in a helmet. Recalling what I had seen the previous day, I felt undone by it, overwhelmed by the scale of the undertaking, of the enormity of the social and cultural history which it sought to communicate. Returning in November, I undertook to approach the work like cinema, paying attention to each of the cantos in full, from start to finish of each 30-minute video. By virtue of the multiple screens and their arrangements in each room, the total absorption of Bishop’s ‘normative attention’ was rendered physically impossible, but nonetheless I wanted to experience in depth what the artist and his collaborators had so finely constructed to understand further the stories it was unfolding. In the context of the more rapid spectatorship of the Biennale, I frequently felt like a stone sitting in a river as people rushed around me. I noticed people briefly snacking, if you will, on moments of footage. I noticed that in a busy space, people gave way more readily to the sight of a smartphone camera being raised towards the screens being watched than to the presence of other people watching. But beyond these habits of spectatorship, I noticed the work’s tactics and

prostoriji, potpuna apsorpcija Bishopine „normativne pažnje“ bila je fizički nemoguća, ali unatoč tome željela sam dubinski iskusiti ono što su umjetnik i njegovi suradnici tako fino konstruirali kako bih dalje razumjela priče koje se odmotavaju preda mnom. U kontekstu dominantne prakse brza prolaska kroz Bijenale, često sam se osjećala kao kamen koji leži u rijeci dok ljudi jure oko mene. Primijetila sam ljude kako nakratko, da tako kažem, „grickaju“ trenutke snimki. Primijetila sam da u prometnom prostoru ljudi lakše ustupaju mjesto pogledu kamere pametnog telefona usmjerene prema ekranima nego prisutnosti drugih ljudi koji gledaju. No osim ovih navika gledanja, primijetila sam taktike i pitanja rada u onome što bismo mogli nazvati, slijedeći Toscana i Kinklea, njegovom „kartografijom kapitala kao svjetskog sustava“ (Toscano i Kinkle, 2015, str. 4): onom koja obuhvaća vrijeme, prostor i povijest kao sazdane od brojnih raspršenih akcija koje se odvijaju unutar nadređenih industrijskih, reprezentacijskih i državnih struktura. U sadržaju i formi djelo je dramatisiralo društveno i fizičko nasilje te otpor koji prati takve strukture, implicitno suprotstavljajući znanje, neznanje i načine konstrukcije znanja sa znanjem kao potpunim pristupom: „voljom za znanjem“ i dominacijom koju ona predlaže. *Listening All Night to the Rain* najbolje se može interpretirati kao *site-specific* umjetničko djelo. Instalacija aktivno odgovara na Britanski paviljon kao arhitektonski i politički entitet te kao akter u reprodukciji imperija. Dovodeći publiku u zgradu kroz podrum, a ne kroz glavna vrata, ona komentira funkciju službene arhitekture i rituala unutar širih kulturnih kompleksa. Vizualno, upotrebom arhivskih fotografija i snimki te novoizrađenog videomaterijala, *Listening All Night to the Rain* proširuje i razara prostor paviljona, otvarajući druge svjetove putem digitalnih ekrana pričvršćenih na materijalnu konstrukciju paviljona. Zvuk prati posjetitelja od samog početka, ali se zvučne kvalitete instalacije mijenjaju između eksterijera i interijera. Vani se zvukovi instalacije miješaju s drugima u susjedstvu. Jednom unutar filcom obložene unutrašnjosti zgrade, zvuk funkcionira tako da obuhvaća i povezuje prostore paviljona. Duboke grimizne, zelene i ljubičaste nijanse raznih prostorija, što je posveta Rothku, naglašavaju osjećaj boravka u čahuri. Tijekom prolaska kroz rad osjetila se miješaju i međusobno artikuliraju, ali prevladavajući način pažnje na koji se poziva je slušanje kao kontemplacija. Voda igra bitnu i strukturirajuću ulogu kao dramaturgija i metafora. Pjevanje I, postavljeno na vanjskoj strani zgrade, počinje plavim slikama – površinama koje bi mogle biti kopno ili more – dok se voda nameće zvukom. Zatim su tu slike vode koja kapa s lišća, s neke vrste raslinja, i štopericu koja pada u kamenito korito rijeke i razbija se. Krajolik se širi, lokve vode postaju stabla, dok ne ugledamo lik crnca u kariranoj košulji u krajoliku – prvu osobu koju vidimo. Međutim, kako video napreduje, otkriva se da su ova i druge slike u ovom pjevanju već potopljene, pod vodom: ne shvaćajući to, već smo ih gledali kroz prozirnost vode. Unutar zgrade krećemo se iz potopljenog, zvučno zatvorenog podruma uza stubište gdje se suočavamo s kompozicijom od audioopreme. Sljedeće pjevanje, zahvaljujući filmskim snimkama oceana koje prikazuju morski život i otpad koji pluta na površini, otkriva da je ovaj skup zvučnika i uređaja analogan objektima koji plutaju poput toksičnog otoka na površini zagađenog mora. U takvu smo krajobrazu mi posjetitelji retrospektivno interpelirani kao morska stvorenja, kao morski život koji pliva kroz zgradu, dok fragmenti političkih govora postaju zazorne podvodne depeše. Tko je vrhovni grabežljivac u ovom scenariju? – kao da pita djelo. Sljedeća pjevanja navigiraju površinom mora i površinom kopna – okolišem koji je u Pjevanju I zamišljen kao već potopljen – pri čemu se tekture zvuka više fokusiraju na akciju na otvorenom.

Tijekom odvijanja instalacije ponavljaju se vizualni tropi. Među njima su uokvirene slike uglavljene među grane drveća, ružičaste plastične patke te snimke insceniranih situacija koje okupljaju robu, predmete i ljude na plahama jarkih boja. Okruženi omotima gramofonskih ploča, fotografijama, radijima, metronomima, prikazima taksonomija leptira i sličnim, ove različite situacije prikazuju različite pojedince, većinom crnce, kako u njima nepomično leže na leđima. Catherine Bush tumači jednu takvu scenu kao onu

questions in what we might call, following Toscano and Kinkle, its “cartography of capital as a world system” (Toscano & Kinkle, 2015, p. 4): one which encompasses time, space and history as constructed of numerous scattered actions proceeding within supervening industrial, representational and state structures. In content and form, it dramatized the social and physical violence and resistance that attends such structures, implicitly contrasting knowing, unknowing and modes of knowledge construction with knowledge as total access: the ‘will-to-know’ and the domination it proposes.

Listening All Night To The Rain might best be interpreted as site-specific art. It responds actively to the British Pavilion as an architectural and a political entity, and an agent in the reproduction of empire. By bringing audiences into the building through the basement as opposed to the front door, it makes a commentary on the function of official architecture and rituals within larger cultural complexes. Visually, through its use of archive images and footage, and newly created video material, *Listening All Night to the Rain* expands and explodes the pavilion space, opening out other worlds via the digital screens attached to the material environment of the pavilion. Sound accompanies the audience member from the get-go, but the installation’s sonic qualities shift between the exterior and the interior. Outside, the installation’s sounds commingle with others in its neighbourhood. Once inside the felt interior of the building, sound functions to contain and connect the pavilion’s spaces. The deep crimson, green and purple hues of the various rooms, a nod to Rothko, accentuate the sensation of being cocooned. Through the journey, the senses are mixed and inter-articulated, but the predominant attentional mode invited is one of listening as contemplation. Water plays a substantial and structuring part as dramaturgy and metaphor. Canto I, staged on the exterior of the building, begins with blue images – surfaces that could be the land or the sea – while water is asserted through sound. It then presents images of water dripping from leaves, from foliage of some kind, and a stopwatch falling to its destruction in the stony bed of a river. The landscape expands, pools of water become trees, until we see a figure of a Black man in a checked shirt in the landscape – the first person we see. However, as the video unfolds, it is revealed that this image and the other images in this canto are already submerged beneath water: without realising it, we have already been looking at them through water’s transparency. Within the building, we move from the drowned, sonically enclosed basement up the set of stairs where we confront the collocation of audio equipment. The next canto along, by virtue of the film shots taken beneath the ocean, gazing at sea life and detritus above, reveals this clutch of speakers and devices to be analogical to objects floating like a toxic island on the surface of a polluted sea. In this imagery, we ourselves as audience members are interpellated retrospectively as sea creatures, as marine life swimming through the building, the political speech fragments turned uncanny underwater dispatches. Who is the apex predator in this scenario, the work seems to ask? The subsequent cantos navigate the surface of the sea and the surface of the land – an environment imagined in Canto I as already submerged – with the qualities of sound becoming more focused on action within the open air.

Amid the installation’s flow, there are recurrent visual tropes. Among them are framed images lodged between tree branches, pink and yellow plastic ducks, and footage of staged scenarios assembling goods, objects and people on brightly coloured sheets. Amid LP covers, photographs, radios, metronomes, images of butterfly taxonomies, and so on, these various scenarios present different individuals, the majority of whom are Black, lying still and supine within them. Catherine Bush interprets one such scene as possessing “a funerary air” featuring “talismanic memorial objects” (Bush, 2025, p. 5).

koja posjeduje „pogrebni ugođaj“ te sadrži „amajlijske memorijalne predmete“ (Bush, 2025, str. 5). Posljednja slika koju smo pozvani pogledati unutar instalacije *Listening All Night to the Rain* tekst je Su Dongpoa, djelo nepodnošljive ranjivosti:

Ja sam poput malog čamca
Osjećam prostranstvo beskrajne vode
Ovdje pod šumarcima drveća
Licem u lice u spavaćoj sobi
Slušajući cijelu noć kišu.

Bez sumnje, ovaj rad i njegova konstrukcija mogu se interpretirati pod rubrikom „reorganizirane pažnje“. No, gledajući iz političke perspektive, decentralizacijom publike on snažnije rezonira s DeLayevom izjavom o snazi isprepletenih sila koje rezultiraju klimatskom katastrofom: „nitko ne zapovijeda božanskim pogledom na polikrizu“ (DeLay, 2024, str. 19).

Zaključak

Listening All Night to the Rain predstavlja izazov „volji za znanjem“, dok istovremeno nastoji objasniti kapitalizam kao sustav. Fokusirajući se na vodu kao sveobuhvatni entitet, bavi se kretanjem kroz nju, u aleatoričkoj sofisticiranosti koja služi kao odgovor na metaforu surfanja primijenjenu na internet, koju Crary kritizira ovako: „surfanje asocira na otvoreno, vodeno okruženje, ali stvarnost su ponavljajući itinerari lišeni stvarnog plutanja ili zastranjivanja“ (Crary, 2022, str. 60). No, što je još važnije, baveći se pomorskom i vojnom poviješću te nadirućim vodama klimatske katastrofe kroz teatralnu hipotezu o Britanskom paviljonu koji se već nalazi pod vodom, djelo se suočava s ulogom vode u kolonijalnom nasilju, posljedicama prošlih zvjerstava i izgledima za buduću katastrofu. Ono rezonira s razmišljanjem Christine Sharpe o „brazdi“ transatlantske trgovine robljem, gdje, kako piše, „[ž]ivjeti u brazdi na globalnoj razini znači živjeti katastrofalno vrijeme i učinke neprestanih i izraženih migracija, sredozemnih i karipskih katastrofa, transameričkih i transafričkih migracija, strukturnih prilagodbi nametnutih od Međunarodnog monetarnog fonda koje nastavljaju imperijalizme/kolonijalizme i još mnogo toga“ (Sharpe, 2016, str. 15). Sharpe promišlja višestruka značenja riječi *wake* kao što su „bdijenje uz mrtve, brazda koju ostavlja brod, posljedica nečega, linija leta i/ili vida, buđenje i svijest“ (2016, str. 18), a sve se to lako može primijeniti na samu instalaciju, njezine reference i učinke. Utjelovljujući aspekte digitalne epistemologije, ključni interes rada *Listening All Night to the Rain* u ovom preplavljujućem kontekstu leži u povijesnom sjećanju. Tome u prilog autor citira bell hooks kako bi inzistirao na tome da je „‘Naša borba također borba sjećanja protiv zaborava’“ (British Council Digital Guide, 2024).

Kritički tretirajući Britanski paviljon i kroz obilazeći modus recepcije, *Listening All Night to the Rain* skreće pozornost na status samog paviljona kao slike ranije epohe britanske imperijalne moći. U međuvremenu, suvremena dominacija digitalne tehnologije koja oblikuje njegovu konstrukciju kao umjetničkog djela također se povijesno i institucionalno podudara s američkom hegemonijom, temom koja se narativno priziva u raznim točkama kroz prisutne reference. Ekranu pričvršćeni na vanjsku stranu zgrade mogli bi se semiotički protumačiti kao progresivni dvojni slika s plakata postavljenih drugdje u Veneciji koji reklamiraju suvremene globalne brendove. Djelo zahtijeva da se konstrukt nacije razumije unutar povijesnog dosega kapitalizma kao svjetskog sustava te, završavajući riječima kineskog pjesnika iz 11. stoljeća Su Dongpoa, aludira na mnogo dulju kulturnu povijest i možda na promjenjivi ekonomski horizont. Iz perspektive

The last image we are invited to look at within *Listening All Night to the Rain* is the text by Su Dongpo, a piece of unbearable vulnerability:

I'm like a little boat
Sensing an expanse of endless water
Here under groves of trees
Face to face in the bedroom
Listening all night to the rain.

Without doubt, this work and its construction can be interpreted under the rubric of 'reorganised attention'. But in decentring the audience member, it resonates more profoundly from a political perspective with DeLay's statement regarding the enormity of the intersecting forces resulting in climate catastrophe: "nobody commands a god's eye view of the polycrisis" (DeLay, 2024, p. 19).

Conclusion

Listening All Night to the Rain presents a challenge to the 'will-to-know', while at the same time seeking to account for capitalism as system. In focusing on water as an all-encompassing entity, it deals with movement through it, in an aleatory sophistication which serves as a rejoinder to the metaphor of surfing applied to the internet, which Crary critiques like this: "surfing connotes an open, aqueous milieu, but the reality is repetitive itineraries devoid of actual drift or waywardness" (Crary, 2022, p. 60). But more importantly, in addressing maritime and military histories, and the rising waters of climate catastrophe by theatrically hypothesising the British Pavilion as already under water, it reckons with water's implication in colonial violence, the consequences of past atrocities, and the prospect of future catastrophe. It resonates with Christina Sharpe's thinking "in the wake" of the transatlantic slave trade, where, she writes, "[l]iving in the wake on a global level means living the disastrous time and effects of continued marked migrations, Mediterranean and Caribbean disasters, trans-American and -African migration, structural adjustment imposed by the International Monetary Fund that continues imperialisms/colonialisms, and more" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 15). Sharpe thinks through the multiple significations of "wake" as "the keeping watch with the dead, the path of a ship, a consequence of something, in the line of flight and/or sight, awakening, and consciousness" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 18), all of which readily apply to the installation, its references, and its effects. While embodying aspects of digital epistemology, the key interest of *Listening All Night to the Rain* in this overwhelming context is in historical memory and it cites bell hooks to insist that "Our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting" (British Council Digital Guide, 2024).

In critically addressing the British Pavilion through the journeying mode of the work, *Listening All Night To The Rain* draws attention to the pavilion's status as itself an echo of an earlier epoch of British imperial power. Meanwhile, the contemporary dominance of digital technology that informs its construction as an artwork also historically and institutionally coincides with US hegemony, a theme invoked narratively at various points by the exhibition's references. The screens attached to the exterior of the building might be interpreted semiotically as the progressive double of billboard imagery deployed elsewhere in Venice for the commercial purposes of contemporary global brands. The work demands that that construct of the nation be understood within the historical ambit of capitalism as a world system, and in concluding with the words of 11th century

vremenske organizacije nema jamstva da će posjetitelj početi tamo gdje djelo, takoreći, počinje – niti da će posjetitelj obaviti planirani obilazak– što osnažuje Bishopinu tvrdnju da u umjetničkim naporima da se privuče pažnja publike „uspjeh nikada nije zajamčen“ (Bishop, 2024, str. 29). Predstavljajući slike u ovom modusu, dok satovi kucaju i voda kapa iz zvučnih krajolika koji nas oplahuju, s *Listening All Night to the Rain* Akomfrah kao da pita: što je slika? Kako, u kontekstu svijeta koji se zagrijava, slike djeluju? Koja je njihova uloga u povijesnom sjećanju? Što je, pred vječnom tvari koja je voda, ljudski konstrukt vremena utemeljenog na satima – ujedno temelj kapitalističkog načina proizvodnje? Njegov fokus na sat, osim što predstavlja referencu na funkcioniranje kapitalizma, postavlja i završno pitanje, posebno relevantno za infrastrukture suvremene vizualne umjetnosti koja se bazira na visokoj eksploataciji ugljika te drugu interpretaciju „volje za znanjem“, onu samog poricanja: što učiniti kada vrijeme istječe?

Chinese poet Su Dongpo, it alludes to a much longer cultural history and perhaps to a changing economic horizon. In temporal terms, there is no guarantee that the audience member will start where the work, as it were, starts – nor that the audience member will undertake the intended journey – giving credence to Bishop’s point that, in artistic efforts to engage audience attention, “success is never guaranteed” (Bishop, 2024, p. 29). In presenting images in this mode, while clocks tick and water drips from the soundscapes in our midst, with *Listening All Night To The Rain* Akomfrah seems to be asking: what is an image? How, in the context of a warming world, do images work? What is their role in historical memory? What, in the face of the eternal substance that is water, is the human construct of clock time – the foundation of the capitalist mode of production? Its focus on the clock, as well as constituting a reference to capitalism’s operations, begs a final question particularly germane to the carbon-intensive infrastructures of contemporary visual art, and another interpretation of ‘will-to-know’, that of denial itself: what is to be done when time is running out?

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