

## Practices of Silence

### *Exercises in Vulnerability in Missing Time*

**Curator:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Genadi Gatev

**Artist:** Kosyo Minchev

## Short Project Description

*Practices of Silence: Exercises in Vulnerability in Missing Time* explores emotional and sensory experiences in contemporary life—fragile, subjective states that, under conditions of acceleration, constant productivity, and a deficit of attention, remain marginalized or invisible. The project affirms vulnerability not as weakness, but as an active ethical and aesthetic practice.

In a world where time is experienced as perpetually absent and fragmented, the exhibition proposes slowness not as escapism, but as a mode of attention, presence, and care. “Missing time” here functions as a space of experience—an **освобождение** from the linear and productive logic of the present, opening instead toward a subjective, embodied, and emotionally conscious temporality: a lived duration in which emotion, sensoriality, and love emerge as enduring forms of meaning.

The project unfolds as a site-specific installation, comprising three large-scale marble sculptures of doves placed in dialogue with a natural element—a tree—at the center of the exterior space, while the interior is structured around a series of 200 pencil and charcoal drawings and a two-channel video installation. Together, these elements create immersive conditions in which the viewer is invited not to consume images, but to participate in a process of inner reflection.

Within the context of the Venice Biennale, the project proposes a poetic and delicate deviation from dominant spectacular and accelerated artistic gestures. It operates within a “minor register,” where the intimate, the fragile, and the vulnerable function as spaces of encounter—with oneself, with the other, and with the world. In dialogue with posthumanist notions of interconnectedness, yet maintaining a critical distance from the reduction of the human to a purely rational subject, the work creates a space for resonance, empathy, and transformation, where fragility and intimacy become carriers of meaning, hope, and the possibility of a slower, more humane experience of the world.

## Project

*Exercises in Vulnerability in Missing Time* investigates emotional, sensory, and subjective experiences in contemporary life—experiences that, under current conditions of temporal deficit, are reduced or rendered invisible through their presumed “insignificance.”

The project draws attention to emotional states that lie outside dominant contemporary ideologies, affirming vulnerability as an ethical and aesthetic choice. It opens a space for a possible exit—toward hope and transcendence—positioned critically against posthumanist deconstructive notions of the human, while simultaneously embracing the posthumanist understanding of relationality and interconnectedness.

## Introduction

The contemporary cultural condition is characterized by the acceleration of social processes, the contraction of attention, and a persistent sense of “lack of time.” This experience of temporal deficit suggests a transformation in the very structure of time itself. While historical consciousness shaped meaning until the late nineteenth century, and the future-oriented horizon dominated much of the twentieth, today neither the depths of the past nor the utopian projections of the future hold significant interest. Instead, experience is reduced to the rapid consumption of the present moment—its immediacy and gratification.

Contemporary art reflects the consequences of this condition: uncertainty, instability, the fragmentation of social relations, distorted temporal perception, a lack of fulfillment despite constant “achievement,” and alienation (*Entfremdung*) understood as the loss of a meaningful relationship with the world.

This state has contributed to a devaluation of artistic value, where provocation becomes an end in itself and society develops an “immunity” to shock. Artistic craftsmanship is increasingly marginalized, as technical virtuosity recedes and the idea that “everyone can be an artist” emerges as one of the enduring illusions of the twentieth century. The result is an overproduction and inflation of images.

Already Theodor Adorno wrote of the “liquidation of technique,” while Giorgio Agamben diagnosed a “crisis of mimetic capacities.” More recently, the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa has described this dynamic through his theory of social acceleration, in which the pace of life increases faster than the human capacity to adapt. According to Rosa, the central conflict lies between the logic of dynamic stabilization—where societies must constantly grow, accelerate, and transform in order to remain “stable”—and the human longing for resonance: meaningful contact, belonging, and reciprocity.

Within this context, art is both affected by acceleration and positioned as a site of resistance. In his book *Resonance*, Rosa articulates a positive anthropology of resonance as a responsive, reciprocal relationship with the world, involving affective attunement, response, and transformation. Art, music, communication, nature, ritual, and deep concentration are all potential sites of resonance.

In a world where time is continuously accelerated and experience reduced to functionality and efficiency, the work of Kosyo Minchev proposes a radically different gesture: slowness—not as withdrawal, but as attention, contemplation, and embodied sensibility.

## Concept

*Exercises in Vulnerability in Missing Time* conceives of art as a space for intimate reflection, empathy, and transformation. Minchev’s work does not analyze, categorize, or explain; it inhabits. It invites the viewer to pass through delicate subjective states in which emotion, sensoriality, and love emerge as quiet yet persistent forms of meaning.

At the center of the project are experiences that usually remain unseen: fragile gestures, personal pauses, moments of vulnerability that seek proximity rather than spectacle. In these moments, time loses its linearity and becomes a space of presence. Vulnerability here is not weakness, but an active practice—an essential condition for empathy and for rethinking how we relate to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

## Core of the Project

Minchev's project explores the potential of art to function as a space where subjective experience, vulnerability, and love become critical and transformative resources. In a contemporary condition marked by constant productivity and an erosion of attention, the exhibition proposes slowness not as nostalgia, but as an ethical and aesthetic stance.

Rather than representation or analysis, the project aims at inhabiting intimacy. The so-called "minor" experiences it foregrounds are not secondary; they carry a distinct form of knowledge grounded in attentiveness, empathy, and embodied sensitivity. The exhibition creates conditions for immersion within "missing time," inviting the viewer not to consume images, but to participate in a process of inner reflection.

Conceptually, the project enters into dialogue with Gaston Bachelard's poetics of intimate space, Henri Bergson's understanding of time as *durée*, and Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of openness to the Other. Love here is not a sentimental motif, but a critical force that challenges conventional notions of autonomy, distance, and control in contemporary art.

Within the context of the Venice Biennale, the project offers a precise deviation from dominant spectacular and declarative gestures. It insists on the necessity of spaces for silence, care, sensoriality, and empathic experience, positioning the poetic as a viable alternative to the rational and instrumental.

## Visual Structure

Upon entering the exterior space, the viewer encounters a tension between scale: three monumental marble sculptures of doves positioned in relation to a tree at the center of the transformed landscape. This site-specific work resonates with the material, symbolic, and historical dimensions of Venice, prompting the viewer to reconsider their own position, presence, and relationship to the environment.

Inside, the space is structured by several series of 200 pencil and charcoal drawings, inviting an immersion into projections of the artist's lived experience. Their delicacy and precision do not signal nostalgia, but a renewed understanding of fundamental existential states and their temporal transformation.

This introspective immersion is supported by two synchronized video projections. The two-channel video presents fragments of time in which the insignificant and unnoticed are elevated into existential gestures and poetic image-making beyond rational categorization. If, for Bachelard, emotion is a lost poetics, these videos enact its return.

## Materiality

The return of material presence in the project responds critically to a dominant culture of simulation. This position resonates with Hal Foster's notion of the "return of the real" as resistance to smooth surfaces, sign-based play, and ideologically neutral conceptualism. Here, the real re-emerges through matter, resistance, and form.

Material is not a neutral carrier but a site of tension and existential condensation. The emphasis on craftsmanship reasserts durability, presence, and resistance against the proliferation of flat, endlessly renewable images. At the same time, this material sensitivity aligns with the architectural and temporal uniqueness of Venice itself.

## Conclusion

The project proposes an alternative logic of existence: slowness and contemplation, combined with experiential intensity. It resists surface-level perception, commodification, and manipulative visual practices such as deepfake technologies and AI-generated imagery. By refusing instantaneous consumption, it reclaims space for subjective time, depth, and meaning.

Within the context of the Venice Biennale, *Exercises in Vulnerability in Missing Time* creates a poetic alternative space in which art does not provide answers, but establishes conditions for experience—opening toward hope, transcendence, and a slower mode of being.

## Relevance and Argumentation

The project articulates a critical yet delicate position toward contemporary art and society, foregrounding intimacy, fragility, and vulnerability as timely responses to global exhaustion and accelerated temporality. Operating within a "minor practice," as articulated by Deleuze and Guattari, Minchev's work invites participation rather than observation.

Vulnerability functions as an ethical and aesthetic field of encounter, resonating with Levinas's philosophy of responsibility toward the Other. By engaging time as lived *durée*, the project contributes to the Venice Biennale not through repetition of its curatorial theme, but through a nuanced deviation—insisting that the future of art lies not only in new technologies, but in its capacity to cultivate attention, care, and shared presence.

## Key References

- Gaston Bachelard – *The Poetics of Space*
- Henri Bergson – *Time and Free Will*
- Emmanuel Levinas – *Totality and Infinity*
- Byung-Chul Han – *The Scent of Time*
- Hartmut Rosa – *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*
- Paul Virilio – *Speed and Politics*