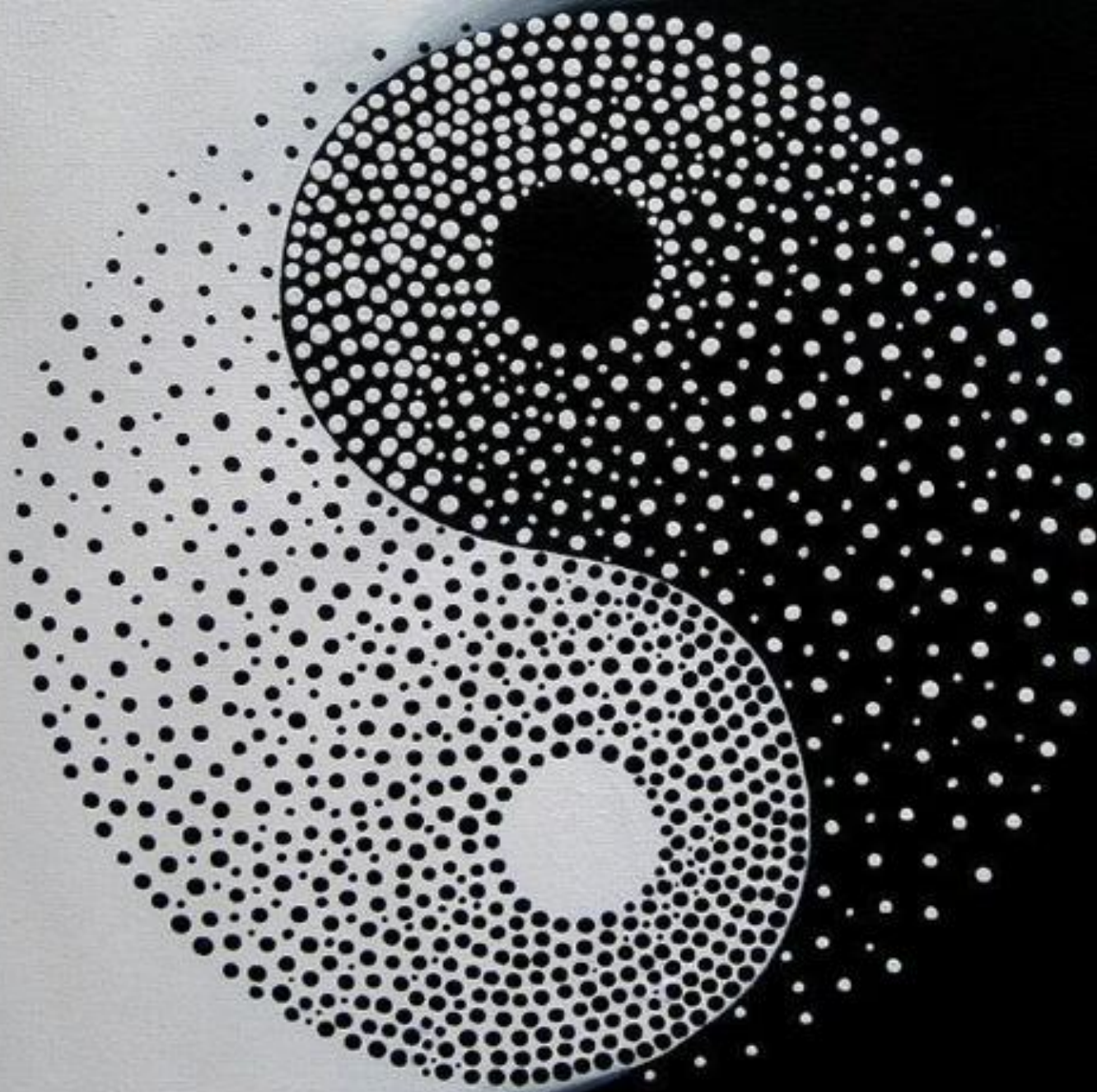




Order within Chaos

Lecture 13 Essay Seminar – Order within Chaos

Week 4 | Time, Memory and the Archive

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)

(Generic) Question 4. Time, Memory and the Archive: *In what ways do contemporary artists and designers reimagine time, memory, and archival practice, whether through repetition, rupture, slowness, or non-linear temporality? How do these temporal aesthetics intersect with cultural, technological, or historical concerns?*

Example Essay 1 - Entropy, Memory, and Regeneration

Focused Question(4): How do contemporary artists reimagine time and memory through the lens of entropy and negentropy, transforming decay into renewal?

Entropy, Memory, and Regeneration



Spiral Jetty (1970)
Robert Smithson



Cloud Cities (2012)
Tomás Saraceno

EXAMPLE 1 – Entropy, Memory, and Regeneration

Essay Question

How do contemporary artists reimagine time and memory through the lens of entropy and negentropy, transforming decay into renewal?

Thesis Statement

While entropy suggests inevitable decay and loss, artists such as **Robert Smithson** and **Tomás Saraceno** reinterpret disorder as a generative condition. Their practices visualize time not as linear deterioration but as a cyclical, self-organizing process, reflecting **Bernard Stiegler's** notion of the *Neganthropocene*—a creative counter-movement to cultural and ecological entropy.

Theorists / Concepts:

Key concepts: Entropy, negentropy, the Neganthropocene, the second law of thermodynamics.

Key Thinkers:

Bernard Stiegler, Alfred North Whitehead, Gilbert Simondon.

Themes: Decay and rebirth, matter as temporal archive, ecological and technological regeneration.

Outline Essay Structure

- 1. Introduction** – Define entropy as temporal decay; introduce Stiegler's *Neganthropocene* and thesis.
- 2. Theoretical Context** – Explain Stiegler's response to the Anthropocene; how negentropy reframes temporality.
- 3. Case Study 1:** *Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty (1970)* – Entropy as visible process; geological time and disintegration as form.
- 4. Case Study 2:** *Tomás Saraceno, Hybrid Webs / Cloud Cities* – Self-organizing systems as living negentropy; ecological time as collaborative network.
- 5. Conclusion** – Re-evaluate time as regenerative rhythm rather than linear decline; connect to contemporary environmental discourse.

Example Essay 2: Rhythm, Duration, and the Body

Focused Question (4): In what ways can artistic performance reveal the tension between mechanised and lived time, transforming rhythm into a site of resistance?

Rhythm, Duration, and the Body



The Artist is Present 2010
Marina Abramović



Time Clock Piece (One Year Performance 1980–1981)
Tehching Hsieh

EXAMPLE 2 — Rhythm, Duration, and the Body

Essay Question

In what ways can artistic performance reveal the tension between mechanised and lived time, transforming rhythm into a site of resistance?

Thesis Statement

Through durational acts that test bodily limits, artists such as **Tehching Hsieh** and **Marina Abramović** expose the conflict between clock-based (linear) and lived (cyclical) time. Framed through **Henri Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis** and **Henri Bergson's** notion of duration, their work reclaims temporality as embodied, affective, and resistant to the standardisation of modern life.

Theorists / Concepts

Key concepts: Cyclical vs linear rhythm, eurhythmia / arrhythmia, duration, repetition.

Key Thinkers: Henri Lefebvre, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition*).

Themes: Embodied temporality, ritual, discipline, and resistance.

Outline Essay Structure

- 1. Introduction** – Outline the human experience of time as both mechanised and lived; introduce thesis.
- 2. Theoretical Context** – Summarise Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* and Bergson's qualitative time; rhythm as cultural and bodily.
- 3. Case Study 1:** *Tehching Hsieh, One-Year Performance (1980–81)* – Linear rhythm of the clock; the body as archive of exhaustion and discipline.
- 4. Case Study 2:** *Marina Abramović, The Artist is Present (2010)* – Cyclical rhythm of breath and gaze; duration as meditative resistance.
- 5. Conclusion** – Argue that durational performance transforms time into lived resistance, bridging body, rhythm, and temporality.

EXAMPLE Essay 3 — *Chaos and the Self-Organising Image*

Focused Question (4): How do contemporary artists transform chaos and complexity into perceptible patterns of order, revealing time as an emergent and self-organising process?

Chaos and the Self-Organising Image



Machine Hallucinations (2020)

Refik Anadol



Cloud Cities (2012)

Tomás Saraceno

EXAMPLE 3 — Chaos and the Self-Organising Image

Essay Question

How do contemporary artists transform chaos and complexity into perceptible patterns of order, revealing time as an emergent and self-organising process?

Thesis Statement

Through immersive and ecological systems, contemporary artists such as Refik Anadol and Tomás Saraceno visualise the dynamic interplay between order and chaos. Drawing on ideas from chaos theory, systems thinking, and Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, their works expose time not as linear sequence but as a living, self-organising rhythm — an unfolding process that mirrors both natural and digital complexity.

Theorists / Concepts

- Ilya Prigogine – *dissipative structures* and order out of chaos
- Henri Lefebvre – *rhythmanalysis* and the coexistence of cyclical / linear rhythms
- Gilles Deleuze – the *diagram* as field of forces; time as becoming
- Yuk Hui – *cosmotechnics* and system ecologies

Themes: Natural and digital systems, feedback loops, complexity aesthetics, rhythm as temporal structure.

Outline Essay Structure

1. **Introduction** Introduce chaos theory as a scientific and philosophical model where order emerges from apparent disorder. Position contemporary art as a space where this dynamic becomes visible and experiential. State thesis: Anadol and Saraceno embody a new temporal aesthetics of self-organisation, connecting the algorithmic and the ecological.
2. **Theoretical Context** Outline **Prigogine's** concept of dissipative systems — structures that maintain order through continual flux. Relate this to **Lefebvre's** rhythmanalysis: cyclical natural rhythms versus linear technological rhythms. Introduce **Deleuze's** idea of the diagram as chaos-to-order field.
3. **Case Study 1 – Refik Anadol, *Machine Hallucinations* (2019–)** Describe Anadol's data visualisations: vast datasets processed by AI to generate fluid, immersive projections. Analyse how algorithms act as strange attractors — shaping chaotic data streams into coherent forms. Connect to Lefebvre: the installation's pulsating rhythm mirrors the tempo of computation, producing a *digital eurhythmia*. Discuss temporality: every frame is generated in real time, collapsing storage (archive) and emergence (event)
4. **Case Study 2 – Tomás Saraceno, *Hybrid Webs* and *Cloud Cities* (2006–)** Present Saraceno's webs as ecological diagrams: spider silk structures created collaboratively with non-human agents. Link to Prigogine: webs as dissipative systems sustained through continuous environmental exchange. Interpret the rhythmic tension between fragility and resilience as an *eco-rhythm* — an entanglement of natural and social time. Contrast Anadol's digital self-organisation with Saraceno's biological one; both translate chaos into patterned being.
5. **Conclusion** Synthesise findings: both artists reveal time as self-patterning process, neither mechanical nor random. Reframe "chaos" as generative field where systems (algorithmic or ecological) find transient harmony. End by suggesting that such works propose a **new cosmotechnics of time** — one that situates human creativity within larger networks of data, matter, and rhythm.

Generic Question (4) to Focused Question (4)

Question 4. Time, Memory and the Archive: *In what ways do contemporary artists and designers reimagine time, memory, and archival practice, whether through repetition, rupture, slowness, or non-linear temporality? How do these temporal aesthetics intersect with cultural, technological, or historical concerns?*

Example Question 1: How do contemporary artists reimagine time and memory through the lens of entropy and negentropy, transforming decay into renewal?

Example Question 2: In what ways can artistic performance reveal the tension between mechanised and lived time, transforming rhythm into a site of resistance?

Example Question 3: How do contemporary artists transform chaos and complexity into perceptible patterns of order, revealing time as an emergent and self-organising process?