Data Composition: an artistic to blur the lines past, present, and future

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The subjective experience of time in humans is liable to a series of perceptual distortions. These distortions do not only affect the temporal microscale of perceived events (e.g. the 'stopped clock' illusion), but may influence the overall concept of a human life continuum. Indeed, events with significant emotional impact are not only misjudged in their duration (e.g. as in the extreme case of "life flashing before one's own eyes" during a near death experience), but the content and sequence of stored memories may be altered. However, even though time perception is subject to neurocognitive fallacies, there is one fundamental inescapable truth for all humans: we are all aware that our lives are finite. It is this knowledge that Blaise Pascal alluded to in speaking about the "grief and despair of the human condition" and indeed what distinguishes humans from other living organisms. The fact that humans live and experience the world on a limited timescale creates a fundamental experiential tension and facilitates our rather

paradoxical relationship to time: we simultaneously want to conquer it and escape it. But what do we really understand about time? Saint Augustine stated that he knew what time was if no one asked, but if anybody did ask, he was not able to explain it.

The complexity of the concept of time was already portrayed early on in Greek mythology with reference to different gods, namely Chronos, Kairos, and Aeon. Each of them had a powerful hand in shaping the experience of time. Chronos was the personification of time that could be measured, flowing from past to present and future, in other words, linear time. Kairos, the youngest son of Zeus, deviated from the power and inertia of Chronos' time and represented a moment, an event, or a personal experience that was remembered for a lifetime. Aeon, who had the face of a lion, had a strong relationship with Kairos; as it describes time in which it is unclear whether an event had already occurred or would occur in the future – a symbol of eternal circulation. In concrete human experience, they appear to be co-present, overlapping, and interwoven together. The exhibition, Data Composition, by GRAYCODE and jiiiiin, is about the complexity of the concept of time and an effort to render its non-linearity audiovisually, in an attempt to escape from its confines.

Artist duo GRAYCODE and jiiiiin are Seoul-based electronic music composers and sound-media artists. Their artistic practice is to both visualize and more importantly to create sonic landscapes reflecting the multifaceted notion of time. Specifically, for this upcoming project, the duo aims to create a tripartite project consisting of an exhibition, a website, and a sound album. One of the strategies to present their own understanding of time in this exhibition is to repeatedly play fragments of sounds in different cycles for the left and right channels, which will generate many vibrations, and to simultaneously

project large-scale abstract black-and-white moving images, simulating an opening of another dimension. Viewers could achieve bodily and sensory experiences of time while exploring the structure of the show carefully constructed by the artists. Visitors to their website will encounter rather cryptic-looking visual information and eventually, through data scavenged from their online participation (e.g. individual login time in website, duration of content viewing), and be utilized as information sources for GRAYCODE and jiiiin's Data Composition sound album, which will be produced after the 50 day-long exhibition.

Many modern philosophers criticize the traditional concept of time, but never completely disregard time itself. Most never deny the idea of time and they do not believe that they can change chronology itself. Indeed, the possibility of manipulating physical time at will or mixing up the past and future time sequences have yet to be scientifically verified. This knowledge, then, begs the question: how exactly do GRAYCODE and jiiiin achieve a universe without time? Are not sounds, moving images, and data some of the most time-dependent elements? The human brain anticipates the future depending on environments and experiences, and continuously improves its own predictions over time. We can even readily find a current, real-life example in global service companies using algorithms to scavenge online data for faster service and more accurate predictions In fact, the data collected through their website for Data Composition would not be utilized to create prediction models, but instead, to provide a specific experience of the convoluted nature of time. The title of the main piece in the exhibition, *on illusion of time*, highlights their approach. Humans are prone to illusions, and fortunately so. Otherwise, how would it be possible to endure the slow disappearance of ourselves, little by little, due to the relentless passage of time?

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