

## re:visions, no. 6, Do (Not) Disturb

Freie Universität Berlin, Sep 2–28, 2025

Deadline: Sep 28, 2025

[revisionsjournal.de/Call-for-Papers-Do-Not-Disturb](https://revisionsjournal.de/Call-for-Papers-Do-Not-Disturb)

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re:visions, a German- and English-language open access journal for art and visual culture of the 20th and 21st century specialized in publishing works by early career researchers is accepting proposals for upcoming issue #6 "Do (Not) Disturb." (May 2026)

Open your phone's settings, and you'll see the familiar crescent moon icon: Do Not Disturb. How often do you activate it? And when you don't, does that mean you want to be disturbed?

By putting our phones and, by extension, ourselves into Do Not Disturb mode, we merely disrupt a system that necessitates such a function in the first place. In *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (2013), art historian Jonathan Crary argues that our era is defined by the imperative of continuous wakefulness and availability. The underlying question becomes: how can we engineer humans to need less rest, stay productive longer, be more exploitable? In a culture of hyperproductivity, idle rest and sleep are luxuries reserved for the privileged and are only encouraged for the wider population if they promise added value. Wellness retreats exist for those who need to "recharge their batteries," much like an overheated computer in need of a system reboot. However, if rest does not deliver "positive energy" in return, it is framed as a failure or a waste.

In this sense, resting can be a quiet form of dissent. As cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han claims in *The Burnout Society* (2010), rest and sleep impede the rhythms imposed by capitalist life, serving as forms of resistance that prevent us from turning into "performance-machines" [Leistungsmaschinen] within our "achievement society" [Leistungsgesellschaft]. Han also laments the erosion of deep attention, which he sees as a precondition for cultural achievement, increasingly undermined by today's hyperattention driven by endless distractions and multitasking. This enhanced productivity engenders intellectual passivity, leaving less room for creative decision-making, reflection, and contemplation. In a landscape dominated by speed and instant feedback, our encounters with artworks risk becoming fleeting and superficial. The omnipresence of digital devices – in do disturb mode – fragments our attention, encouraging us to skim rather than linger, to capture moments for the screen rather than fully experience them. This raises a crucial question: have we become passive consumers, or is this behavior symptomatic of a deeper shift? Has the attention economy reshaped not only our engagement with art but also our very sense of presence?

More recently, Claire Bishop has offered a more hopeful lens in *Disordered Attention: How We Look at Art and Performance Today* (2024). Technology, she posits, has become our "prosthesis

for viewing.” We no longer contemplate a single artwork in silence. Instead, we navigate a fragmented circuit: read the label, take a photo, google the artist, reply to a message, post about it on social media. We exist here and elsewhere, attending to both the artwork and the endless scroll. “Technology isn’t going away,” Bishop asserts. “We need to engage with and work through it.”

The topic of re:visions #6, Do (Not) Disturb, thus implies two disparate modes of navigating the society of achievement. On one hand, the need for a “power nap,” “digital detox,” or “break from reality” can be viewed as an enforced withdrawal to enhance future focus and productivity even further, in which case disturbance might be necessary. On the other hand, rest breaks the grip of late capitalist pace, rendering itself legitimate and vital. Art, too, oscillates between these poles. Art is commonly understood to demand undivided attention. Theatres, museums, galleries, and cinemas often ask the audience to step out of the productive rhythm and enter another temporality: slow, quiet, relaxing. These are the spaces of suspended time where deep contemplation and full absorption might yield aesthetic experiences, reassuring the viewer of their existence and keeping them “sane” and “well-behaved,” ultimately serving the capitalist system by keeping us in the flow. But art also disturbs. It intervenes, interrupts, and demands attention in moments when we might prefer to look away. It can disrupt habitual modes of perception, push us out of complacency, and confront us with what we’d rather ignore.

Do (Not) Disturb is not a call for escapism. Instead, we invite graduate students and early career scholars, researchers, writers, and artists to question what it means to resist the imperatives of never-ending optimization and to explore the possibilities offered by the dispersed neurological states brought about by the attention economy. We invite reflections on rest and sleep, idleness and slowness, hyperattention and exhaustion, focusing on how these states manifest through artworks or in relation to the art world.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Sleep and “uselessness”
- Monetization of sleep on social media
- New modes of attention: distraction, hyperactivity, hybrid perception/spectatorship
- Deep attention vs. distraction
- Capitalization of lives and the attention economy
- Collective fatigue
- Rest in art and activism: e.g., Nap ministry (Tricia Hersey), Bare minimum collective, Black power naps
- Artistic strategies for attention management and the disruption of the productivity/rest dichotomy
- Dreaming about work (but not surrealism) and sleeping disorders

Please submit an elaborated proposal of approximately 500 words, written in either English or German. The submitted proposals will be evaluated by our editorial team in a double blind peer-review. Contributors will be invited to write a 3,000 to 5,000 word paper if their proposals are selected. Contributions will appear in the sixth issue of re:visions, which is slated for publication in May 2026. We particularly encourage members of marginalized communities underrepresented in academic writing (including queer individuals and BIPoC) to hand in contributions.

The deadline for submissions is September 28, 2025.

Please email your proposal and a short bio as a Word document to [revisionsjournal.fu@gmail.com](mailto:revisionsjournal.fu@gmail.com)

For our submission guidelines please refer to our stylesheet.

For more information and news regarding the journal follow our Instagram account @revision-sjournal.

Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/50455>>.