



ATTENTION AND THE LAW (A report on Politics of Attention VI) 6 September 2024

(Opening “Diamonds in everything” exercise led by Amalia Mayorga)

14:21:20 From Christel Manning to Everyone:
interesting ... this felt like meditation.

14:21:51 From Christel Manning to Everyone:
I have trouble staying focused, the first minute felt really long

14:22:04 From Larry Berger to Everyone:
felt a lightness and an energy around the object

14:22:24 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:
Amalia taught me yesterday that humans are drawn to diamonds because they resemble the effect of light-on-water... ie the promise of sustenance. Cool that beauty and survival can be so closely intertwined.

14:22:36 From Etienne / K. Verlag to Everyone:
@amalia mayorga could you please share the Rosa Luxemburg passage in the chat?

14:22:44 From Ana Marques to Everyone:
i realize how i tend to go to fantasy/what is NOT there when i nudge my perspective towards potential... humm... and so that led me to attend to what is THERE and i really thanked the plants for lending their medicine to the spray and the container for making it possible to carry it anywhere! it's really amazing, ultimately

14:22:56 From Christel Manning to Everyone:
I noticed some dust on the object, tried resisting temptation to wipe it off and just observe it ... but I couldn't help myself :)

14:23:21 From Brenna McCulloch to Everyone:
Reacted to "Amalia taught me yes..." with ❤️

14:23:25 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:
I spend my time with an ingot – a lump of metal that I am using to ring the chime. Its diamonds? Hmmm. From the earth it came.... And there, was it near the stuff of actual diamonds? Or maybe that is wrong.... In its opacity, maybe it longs for the fire of gem-nature.... Or.... Then.... It occurs to me... in the sound it brings forth? Is that its diamond-ness?

14:23:28 From Sebastian Watzl to Everyone:
I was looking at a handle on the window in front of me. I first attended to it as an object, “Vorhanden” like one a Museum and then in the first session thought about Heidegger on Zurhandenheit a bit. IN the secod session, I first tried to find its Diamonds in its beauty, but then realized it wasn't there. It was in the way it disappears into the background so smoothly, just warm and just cold enough to be unnoticed. A diamond you best see by not attending to “it”

14:23:29 From Caroline van Zeijts to Everyone:

I was thinking about this fabric print from bread and puppet I got at their show yesterday:
<https://breadandpuppetpress.org/products/7-basic-needs-demon-confrontation> and it was comforting to think about it being made, who I was at the show with when I got it, the future of the object in my life

14:23:39 From Ellyn Daly to Everyone:

Reacted to "I was thinking about..." with ❤️

14:23:47 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "Amalia taught me yes..." with ❤️

14:23:47 From Jeff Dolven to Everyone:

Would you look at my stapler!—a Swingline 444; a minute is just about enough time to familiarize yourself with its simple and satisfying mechanics. Then, give it a few functionless pumps, and look! A palmful of diamonds, or maybe, spectacles for looking at diamonds.

14:23:52 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "felt a lightness and..." with ❤️

14:24:00 From Kristen to Everyone:

There is nearly a kiss on the bag of cat food.

14:24:00 From sara to Everyone:

Reacted to "Would you look at my..." with ✨

14:24:00 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Reacted to "Would you look at my..." with ❤️

14:24:03 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Replying to "felt a lightness and..."

Beautiful insight Larry, I had a similar experience !

14:24:05 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:

I was most interested in the way the object showed wear - not in ways I expected or had ever noticed before.

14:24:07 From Zachary Wojtowicz to Everyone:

Reacted to "Would you look at my..." with 🎉

14:24:22 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "Testing the chat her..." with ❤️

14:24:42 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:

The PT object from my chiropractor. Soft curves and a couple of hard lines. Asymmetrical in one direction. Bright white, nearly glowing, capturing the light on its face, but shadows on other sides. Texture is smooth and looks almost velvety. With words on one surface in a sci-fi font. Like the "worm" of NASA logo.

14:24:50 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Replying to "@amalia mayorga coul..."

Yes!

14:24:56 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Reacted to "The PT object from m..." with ❤️

14:25:04 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "i realize how i tend..." with ❤️

14:25:09 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "I noticed some dust ..." with ❤️

14:25:10 From David Landes to Everyone:

Plywood hole in desk: layered strata of flaked woodchip chaos, frozen relic of violent amputational severance. So much motion motionless. Someone was here, the woodscreams eternal. There's much energy in this tree's corpse. Diamonds witness, fond with grace.

14:25:32 From Alex Balgiu to Everyone:

objects carry their diamondshadows

14:25:40 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Reacted to "objects carry their ..." with ❤️

14:25:48 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "I was looking at a h..." with ❤️

14:25:54 From Brenna McCulloch to Everyone:

I was attending to how many small parts were contained within my object — multitudes!

14:25:55 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Replying to "I was looking at a h..."

Beautiful!

14:25:59 From Ellyn Daly to Everyone:

Reacted to "Plywood hole in desk..." with ❤️

14:26:09 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Replying to "I was thinking about..."

Caroline I also went to that show yesterday yes!!!

14:26:21 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "Would you look at my..." with ❤️

14:26:50 From Kyle Winston-Lindeboom to Everyone:

The delete at the bottom right of my keyboard

I first appreciated the form — the truncated pyramidal top, slightly curved at the corner which tapers down to an almost-point. The top edge, from my vantage, is slightly concave whereas the bottom appears convex. The cleanliness of the key (which is whiteish) is suddenly so clean compared to the the well-used 0/Ins key right next to it. The key seems so proud at the bottom edge of the keyboard, just hanging on. The grey border and the grid of the surrounding keys starts to emerge, which hovers and organizes all the neighbors.

14:27:24 From jessica gallucci to Everyone:

Empty Chobani Flip yogurt container: in phase 1 I noticed every plane and how each of the corners are curved, as well as the color of the plastic, which is an ivory-beige that seems specifically chosen to make the yogurt seem whitest white. Phase 2/diamonds: the colors of the label and its font ("Cookies & Cream") plus the illustrations of the Oreos are very arresting! And there are streaks of leftover yogurt all around the inside which seem to my hungry-animal mind to be the brightest "diamonds", though I can also really appreciate the engineering that went into the object as a mass-produced thing.

14:27:44 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "I was attending to h..." with ❤️

14:27:48 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Reacted to "The delete at the bo..." with ❤️

14:29:26 From amalia mayorga to Everyone:

Quote from the Practice - "this perspective is connected with Luxembourg's notion of love, which she claims 'brings out the noblest and most beautiful qualities in each person, because it raises up the most ordinary and insignificant details and sets it around with diamonds.'"

(Discussion of our Summer Scholars program)

14:31:47 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

And these were HIGH SCHOOL KIDS....

14:32:06 From David Landes to Everyone:

Reacted to "And these were HIGH ..." with 🙌

14:32:46 From Etienne / K. Verlag to Everyone:

Replying to "Quote from the Pract..."

thank you!

14:34:29 From Katie Murphy to Everyone:

Reacted to "Quote from the Pract..." with ❤️

14:35:15 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:



14:35:26 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Write me!! peter@sustainedattention.net
14:35:40 From Kyle Winston-Lindeboom to Everyone:
Reacted to "👏" with 👏

14:50:15 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

For all the German speakers out there:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gleH3BDe_GU&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fmail.google.com%2F&embeds_referring_origin=https%3A%2F%2Fmail.google.com&source_ve_path=MjM4NTE

14:51:00 From Sebastian Watzl to Everyone:

Reacted to "For all the German s..." with 👍

BREAKOUT REPORTS FOLLOW:

15:07:56 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Amalia, Jeff, Katie, Elisa, Brad pt 1

Jeff:

Send people out as emissaries and have periodic in-person workshops in New York (or elsewhere).

Amalia:

Imagine having a swap—emissaries go to say Kentucky, and some interested people come to NYC and have exchange.

We have a trove of texts—we could spend time with a selection of such texts and then we meet and discuss.

Establish a sequence of steps.

Elisa:

If some of us could host, where we have people come from the community and meet with people in whatever place.

There are activist applications that might be hyper-local—what's happening in local school systems? to grow a list of very specific outreaches that apply in different circumstances. Make this an activism oriented toward local politics.

15:07:57 From Caroline van Zeijts to Everyone:

- list of activities (like the one we did with the diamonds) useful to starting conversations
- list of readings to get the language and the framing (readings about Strother's work specifically)
- virtual training/certification for instructors—meet three times with homework so people understand the language (i.e. Ezra Klein for the listen to one thing 3 times, the language of "fracking")
- ^if consistency of language is encouraged
- Strother posts about it on their Instagram—has some of those circles of ("where to find people in your city")
- Materials i.e. flyers for the new people to print with spots to say where they meet (coffee shop, bars, parks), or zines
- Stipend for chapters?
- Encourage research specific to neighborhood/community
- What it could look like: reading sections + sidewalk studies of 6-10 people so there is a balance (also of a social component and activity), Introduction/lecture to bring people into the thinking

15:08:05 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

(1/2)

ANA: Stickers! With memes! People love stickers! // Attentional Care event. Touring around the US. With SoRA facilitators.

ESZTER: Using psychoanalytic practices in partnership. Two people coming together regularly and listening to each other as the one person pays attention to their internal experience in the moment.

MIHIR: Critical question: Who are the partners in these different places? How do you tap into libraries and museums? Who are the “fellow travelers”?

15:08:08 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Amalia, Jeff, Katie, Elisa, Brad pt 2

Katie:

Which is going to be more important internationally, across languages.

A straw man question: How much does it matter that people do it right? How much uniformity are we going for? How much space do we want to leave people to develop their own strategies and approaches?

A resource of facilitation—here are things that we’ve done that have worked. Here are things to watch out for.

Amalia:

How do we deliver a supportive container for people, and how do we make sure that people are sticking with our message?

Jeff:

I think energetic people have the most energy when they’re giving latitude to make it up for themselves.

The one essential ingredient is trying to something such as a bird practice, to taste it and have a feel for how this can be a collective experience.

15:08:17 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Amalia, Jeff, Katie, Elisa, Brad pt 3

Elisa:

It can sound very abstract and theoretical. How does thirty minutes proceed? But when you have experience.

Amalia:

I have really found the three pillars supportive: organizing, creating sanctuaries, educating. With just that we could do a lot.

15:08:40 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

(2/2)

15:08:42 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

ANA: I’m doing work with folks in Brazil for decentralized web models. In Brazil, there are a ton of people already doing that. MAPPING who is *already* doing this work. Who is already “SoRA-ish”? // We’re also experimenting with open social protocols and open-source blueprints. How can we transmit these forms and processes for iteration and adaptation? // I think a lot about regenerative attention and experiential design.

What would we put in the box?

ANA: A deck of cards with non-linear question prompts.

MIHIR: To borrow a tool from internet architecture: Let’s think about what is the “MINIMUM SET” of things that you need to give people? Rather than the maximal possibility — what’s the smallest set of things that will give people full ownership of their attention activism work?

ESZTER: Tools that teach about attention through the gaze - detail-oriented gaze, sharp eyes vs. soft eyes.

ANA: A campaign!!!

15:09:12 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

Sara:

Has been thinking of starter packs, and the level of coordination needed for impact. Does it have to be coordinated, and to what degree?

Brooke:

In process of starting an attention activist community in Pittsburgh as part of phd dissertation. How coordinated with SORA should it be, vs independently developing and merging into overall movement later?

Vitoria:

We talked about how the group has learned something.. learned to not getting into psychology because people can start to transfer things that they shouldn't... so maybe there is a core of learnings that helps to be shared. Because then you have to start from zero... Important to stay attuned to the pleasure aspect of this.

Julian:

On the register of offering information for activists, how about disseminating best practices for trying out practices of attention on one's own in order to understand how it feels, what it might change. So as to be able to understand dynamics of fashioning collective space of sanctuary.

15:09:28 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Replying to "(1/2)

ANA: Stickers..."

correction: attention CARAVAN tour! although that's sure care events...

15:10:05 From jessica gallucci to Everyone:

[1]

Etienne Verlag, Ellyn Daly, Graham Burnett

Etienne: I run an agency The Climate Emergency Software alliance and we bring people and train them in a day-long workshop and then they are 8k autonomous agents training others in countries Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines. The model works well for us because those people are reporting back, and the model is constantly iterating based on the feedback. We don't organize them, we basically train them to be trainers.

Graham: are they comped?

EV: no, they're celebrated, they get shout-outs online. We do regional gatherings and we pay for them to come, they meet the president etc. There's not remuneration but there are other incentives.

GB: Ellyn do you have thoughts on this space?

15:10:23 From jessica gallucci to Everyone:

[2]

ED: I do like the idea of bi-directional comms and mutual learning. What came up for me was something like a buddy-system or a mentor system. One way in which this project may differ is that the attention journey is one of personal transformation and also transformation of the journey. A chapter structure would be interesting, I'd be interested in how it's maintained.

EV: The bi-directional communication and letting the lessons feed back is really important. One big challenge is building in how the org learns from what it's doing by doing it. However those chapters or cells are structured, they need to find ways to communicate back without bottlenecks.

15:10:32 From jessica gallucci to Everyone:

[3]

GB: Figuring out what to put in the kit is the question. Is there a kit?

JG: Etienne, anything specific that you can recall that was maybe a universal piece of feedback from maybe the first round of trainings when your org was in its infancy?

EV: In December it will be our 10th anniversary. The most universal thing was the politics of yes: these are severely climate-change-affected places. Trying to affirm forms of mutual aid and care through

the system we're building rather than saying "climate change bad bad bad," is essential [there was more said here that I couldn't capture, Etienne & all please feel free to amend! -JG]

15:10:34 From Alex Balgiu to Everyone:

I have to leave into the night now unfortunately, thank you so much for such an enlightening and warm séance ♥

15:11:05 From David Landes to Everyone:

Key Qs: What does it mean for us to be part of the movement? What does this commit ppl to?

What are some ways to NOT do this and to avoid common pitfalls? Who to partner with? How to ensure integrity and sustainability?

Larry Berger has many examples of activist groups that scale and have common structures.

Example: Citizen Studios Group, based on democracy of attention, deep supportive listening to each other.

Example: climate groups.

Example: mindfulness groups, paying attention together.

Kristin: not a lot of activism has come from digital congregation. Interpersonal trust and togetherness is difficult. Idea: bring someone in to lead practices of attention, classes, dinners, get to know each other IRL connectedness/trust.

Starter Kit: sidewalk studies and course materials - great material to spread.

Include practices of attention that don't go under that name.

Case studies + curricula + principles

15:12:22 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BkKwgQjqSpT5W8a2ChbjGiR3_oLaryiV

15:12:58 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Replying to "https://drive.google..."

it's locked!

15:13:27 From jessica gallucci to Everyone:

Reacted to "I have to leave into..." with ♥

15:13:43 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

Eek! Try this?

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BkKwgQjqSpT5W8a2ChbjGiR3_oLaryiV?usp=sharing

15:14:32 From Alyssa Loh to Everyone:

Notes - Kristen, Zachary, Kyle, Alyssa [1]

Zachary recalled a professor of Futurism that had a board game that he gave to people for stoking imagination; Zachary found that useful, a tool that's in a form that people are already familiar with, can be a good way of giving people our "capsule" of materials

Kristen brought up AA as an intriguing model – especially the idea of a SPONSOR and a HANDBOOK – this makes it scalable – and keeps you tethered to the central group

Zachary called our attn to how many other people are working on shaping attn – visual artists, musicians, therapists – who could be our collaborators

Alyssa said this is exactly what we need as we build out network because we'll need to borrow other people's property in other cities (borrowed "sanctuaries" of attn)

15:14:35 From Brenna McCulloch to Everyone:

Taking the labor organizer approach to training. Rather than giving someone fully completed guides, interested party could have a conversation with Peter/the Friends about the things that matter to them, then design an activity/curriculum (or sidewalk study, etc) around it — that way there's vested, personal interest from the new organizer that grounds them in the work

Also, balancing the above with the need to provide suggestions; some people reaching out don't have specific ideas, but are in need of guides

Inspired by Céline Condorelli's "Support Structures" practice with architecture, we could create tools that serve as community devices / physical structures (a set of chairs, a playground, something that

respond's to various settings and people's practical spatial needs) — a flexible approach to making a structure of support across locations

15:14:39 From Alyssa Loh to Everyone:

Notes [2]

15:14:40 From Alyssa Loh to Everyone:

Kyle noted that texts and proposed practices are valuable but that the trove we provide on our site is actually a bit overwhelming, especially because attn is SUCH a broad category, and so if the trove isn't VERY precisely organized and categorized, it becomes much less useful.

Zachary noted that what he would need to create a satellite community is a BUDDY – at least one friend or person, possibly connected to the main group – he was making it with.

15:14:46 From Brenna McCulloch to Everyone:

Replying to "Taking the labor org..."

Inspired by Publication Studio - they provide a conceptual model/approach, but they allow people to take that on in different cities to duplicate the project, open tools, they produce it with their own means — give someone the blueprints

15:15:05 From Etienne / K. Verlag to Everyone:

This was massively uplifting! Thank you so much everyone!

15:15:17 From Katie Murphy to Everyone:

Reacted to "This was massively u..." with ❤️

15:15:22 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

(If it doesn't work, we will send out a link post-meeting!)

15:15:23 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Replying to "Eek! Try this? https..."

not yet, at least not for me :/

15:17:48 From Jacob Weger to Everyone:

Hear hear!

15:17:56 From Caroline van Zeijts to Everyone:

Reacted to "Hear hear!" with 🎉

15:18:22 From Julian Chehirian to Everyone:

wow!

15:18:26 From Christel Manning to Everyone:

REally love that quote, GRaham! Can you provide link to source please

15:18:28 From Brit Naylor to Everyone:

thank you everyone!

15:18:37 From Sebastian Watzl to Everyone:

Great quote!!

15:18:47 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

“There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening.”

— Marshall McLuhan

15:40:35 From D. Graham Burnett to Everyone:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/10665984/video/864499054>