

[E-BOOK] The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic (Technologies of Lived Abstraction)

# The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic (Technologies of Lived Abstraction)

*Eleni Ikoniadou*

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**Eleni Ikoniadou : The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic (Technologies of Lived Abstraction)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic (Technologies of Lived Abstraction):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Sounding the Imperceptible By StreetlightReader In what ways can digital art - and especially sonic digital art - put us in touch with the currents that run below the thresholds of perception, the furtive intensities that squirrel away in the viscera of our bodies? Such is the question that guides Eleni Ikoniadou's little book on 'The Rhythmic Event', one that attends to 'the imperceptible in sound' in order to better grasp

their very real effects on the world about us. Hewing closely to the neo-Deleuzian philosophical vision of Brian Massumi and Erin Manning - editors of the 'Technologies of Lived Abstraction' series in which this book appears - *The Rhythmic Event* comes across less as a renovation than as an extension of that theoretical universe, almost a kind of 'application', framed here in the very specific terms of sonic media. Indeed for Ikoniadou, sound, with all its vibratory, energetic and rhythmic qualities, makes for a privileged site of sensual inquiry, bringing into sharp relief the many claims made by the recent wave of affect theory. And as far as that project goes - using sound art to illustrate the principles of an affect-attendant philosophy - *The Rhythmic Event* does admirably. On the other hand, despite the interesting range of works surveyed - the photography of Idris Khan, installation work by Lynn Pook and Julien Clauss, the sensory experiments of AELab and the 'audio spotlight' art of Marie Sester to name a few - the book suffers, I think, from a lack of ambition. While opening with a promising and genuinely thought-provoking effort to reevaluate 'the digital' in light of its received status as a diminished cousin of the apparently richer realm of the analog, the rest of the book loses this 'theorizing momentum' and tails off into a bit of 'cataloging effort', running artworks through Ikoniadou's interpretive lens to bring out and detail premises already established early on. It's all fine as far as it goes, I just wish it went... further. Still, this is a refreshing book for both its clarity and the unique angle(s) from which it approaches its subject.

The sonic has come to occupy center stage in the arts and humanities. In the age of computational media, sound and its subcultures can offer more dynamic ways of accounting for bodies, movements, and events. In *The Rhythmic Event*, Eleni Ikoniadou explores traces and potentialities prompted by the sonic but leading to contingent and unknowable forces outside the periphery of sound. She investigates the ways in which recent digital art experiments that mostly engage with the virtual dimensions of sound suggest alternate modes of perception, temporality, and experience. Ikoniadou draws on media theory, digital art, and philosophical and technoscientific ideas to work toward the articulation of a media philosophy that rethinks the media event as abstract and affective. *The Rhythmic Event* seeks to define the digital media artwork as an assemblage of sensations that outlive the space, time, and bodies that constitute and experience it. Ikoniadou proposes that the notion of rhythm--detached, however, from the idea of counting and regularity -- can unlock the imperceptible, aesthetic potential enveloping the artwork. She speculates that addressing the event on the level of rhythm affords us a glimpse into the nonhuman modalities of thought proper to the digital and hidden in the gaps between strict definitions (e.g., human/sonic/digital) and false dichotomies (e.g., virtual/real). Operating at the margins of perception, the rhythmic artwork summons an obscure zone of sonic thought, which considers the event according to its power to become.

*The Rhythmic Event* is a deep plunge into an aesthetics of experience expanded into pattern, perception and sound, and onwards into an abstract viscosity. Ikoniadou is a crucial guide to the dark chambers of recent interactive art. (Matthew Fuller, Digital Culture Unit, Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London) *The Rhythmic Event* rethinks the digital in striking terms. Here the digital is relational, contingent, and always mixed up with the incalculable. It also rethinks rhythm. Here rhythm is an ongoing creation of worlds. This is a creation so in excess of our normal range of perception that humans can sense it only with the assistance of groundbreaking work by artists and technologists. It then rethinks time in terms of vibratory potential. It brings all this together beautifully, drawing on unusual examples at the junction of art and technology. *The Rhythmic Event* makes a major contribution to contemporary thinking about the digital, perception, art, and technology. It is no exaggeration to say that it will make you think about -- and feel -- the world differently. (Andrew Murphie, University of New South Wales, Sydney) In *The Rhythmic Event*, Eleni Ikoniadou explores the fringes of acoustic experience. Deftly combining theoretical speculation with close accounts of recent digital artworks, she calls attention to sonic events that we feel rather than directly hear, that move us without our being able to grasp just how, and that open us to a world of microperceptions and suspended temporalities. (Steven Shaviro, DeRoy Professor of English, Wayne State University) Eleni Ikoniadou's *The Rhythmic Event* develops as a speculative-experimental exploration of the abstract materiality of rhythm. Drawing on the work of a range of contemporary philosophers, she constructs an analysis of digital media art practices that works between disciplines. What emerges from her account is a conceptualization of the 'rhythmicity' of the event that probes the value of a radical empiricist approach to the microaesthetics of media art forms that operate across both the actual and virtual, human and nonhuman dimensions of contemporary experience. (Andrew Goffey, Associate Professor of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham) Ikoniadou's *The Rhythmic Event* provides a substantial Deleuzian analysis of contemporary digital sound art, and her work stands as an important contribution to a new materialist understanding of the digital, particularly the affective experiences that digital audio is capable of eliciting from a body. (InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture) About the Author Eleni Ikoniadou is a Lecturer in Media in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University, London.