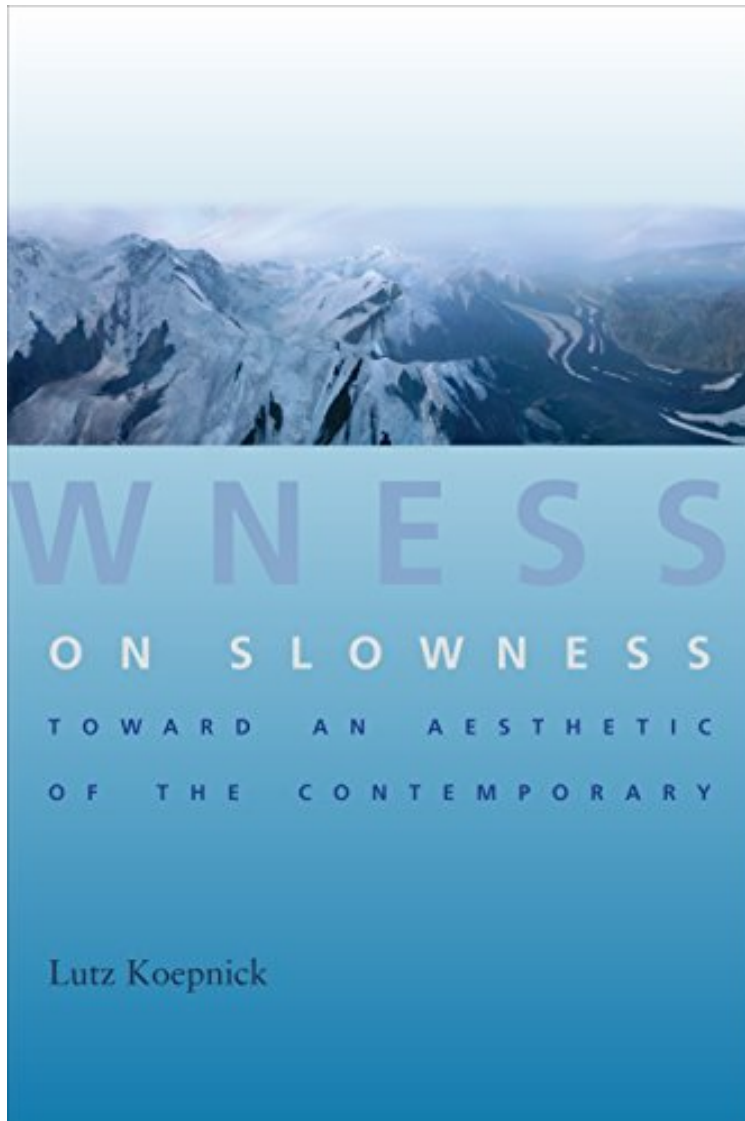


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## On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary (Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social Criticism, and the Arts)

*Lutz Koepnick*

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**Lutz Koepnick : On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary (Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social Criticism, and the Arts)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary (Columbia Themes in Philosophy, Social

## Criticism, and the Arts):

Speed is an obvious facet of contemporary society, whereas slowness has often been dismissed as conservative and antimodern. Challenging a long tradition of thought, Lutz Koepnick instead proposes we understand slowness as a strategy of the contemporary—a decidedly modern practice that gazes firmly at and into the present's velocity. As he engages with late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century art, photography, video, film, and literature, Koepnick explores slowness as a critical medium to intensify our temporal and spatial experiences. Slowness helps us register the multiple layers of time, history, and motion that constitute our present. It offers a timely (and untimely) mode of aesthetic perception and representation that emphasizes the openness of the future and undermines any conception of the present as a mere replay of the past. Discussing the photography and art of Janet Cardiff, Olafur Eliasson, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Michael Wesely; the films of Peter Weir and Tom Tykwer; the video installations of Douglas Gordon, Willie Doherty, and Bill Viola; and the fiction of Don DeLillo, Koepnick shows how slowness can carve out spaces within processes of acceleration that allow us to reflect on alternate temporalities and durations.

Lutz Koepnick's understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of 'slowness' is refreshingly optimistic and energetic. It propels the reader to discover his or her own instances of slowness amid the dizzying culture of speed in which we find ourselves enmeshed. Through close and careful analyses of select primarily visual works, Koepnick constructs a thesis of contemporary 'slowness' that is in dialogue with theories of modernity and engaged with the potentiality of contemporaneity. A rigorous thinker, Koepnick brilliantly presents new material and theoretical analyses in a form that is compelling and accessible. (Nora M. Alter, Temple University) On Slowness is predicated on the common notion that speed, acceleration, and catastrophic events are at the core of modernism. Lutz Koepnick shows that this view is too simplistic as there always were retarding aspects and slow movements within modernism itself. Koepnick's readings of specific art works and interventions are compelling and encourage the reader to think of other examples, to question how temporality and space are lived and represented today, to ask what aesthetic strategies can be persuasive in our world and why. (Andreas Huyssen, Columbia University) A satisfying read. (Library Journal) About the Author Lutz Koepnick is the Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of German and cinema and media arts at Vanderbilt University. He has written widely on film, art, aesthetic theory, and new media aesthetics. His other publications include *Framing Attention: Windows on Modern German Culture and Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power*.