

***nonstop—
an exhibition about
the speed of life***

storyboard

Prologue

Outside, the exhibition can initially be seen from a long distance. A 70-m ramp leads visitors via the fastest, most direct route to the first floor of the exhibition. The different speeds of the visitors are visible on the ramp. On the left is the overtaking lane for the fast participants. Whoever opens the door into the exhibition “about the speed of life” is met with the provocative statement that we are all too slow. Slow or fast? Those who want to start the tour at an accelerated pace can take the fireman’s pole. The others can take the spiral staircase.

“In China, one learns that we have to think faster. To a large extent, global developments are rushing past us. We are simply too slow.”

Albert Speer, urban planner (including a project in the Chinese industrial centre of Changchun), Frankfurt am Main.

time safe

Exhibitions adhere to opening times. Guided exhibition tours keep to an exact starting time. Buses and trains keep to timetable times. Our life is governed by time. The watch on your wrist or the digital display on your mobile provides guidance on the time management of an exhibition visit. But what would happen if the exhibition were declared a time-free zone? At nonstop, wearing or carrying timepieces is strictly prohibited – here you are governed by your own sense of time. The exhibition visitors are asked to lock their wristwatches and mobile phones in a private safe. There are 200 numbered compartments for this. In the entrance area, these compartments come together to form a whole. In the exhibition hall, the view opens onto a display of the assembled timekeepers: the Swatches, Certinas, iPhones and BlackBerrys. Representations of life governed by time, they buzz and tick and vibrate when receiving messages.

rush hour

Our life is fast and our time is fast-paced. The perception of acceleration and pace is an individual thing, but the fact of increased speed is undisputed. Life has become faster, and the end of this acceleration is not yet in sight. Visitors take an audio tour of this speed society. The space works with a soundscape and the accompanying images in one's head. It receives the visitors with the acoustic effect of drops of water, with which time was measured in ancient Rome and then builds up to a crescendo: typewriters and high-speed copiers, steam engines and thundering intercity express trains, whirring computers, ringing mobile phones. The blissful, gentle swish of time metamorphoses into an unbearable rush hour of the modern era. The 24-track acoustic composition created for this space is three-dimensional and distributed among 30 loudspeakers. With its tones, it creates a bodily experience of the accelerated world. A strong prelude is the starting point, based on which the visitors explore the speed society

speedmaster

Nonstop and speed are the key messages of the project. Acceleration is the prerequisite for innovation, increased productivity and progress. The pacesetter space encapsulates the meaning of these keywords. Industry figures state the speed setting of their particular sector, explain how they speed up processes and provide evidence of the acceleration with facts and figures.

The outer cover makes acceleration visible as an upward shooting spiral of technical innovation, social change and a faster pace of living. Three moving ticker texts trace the cultural history of acceleration. With selected milestones of technological development, with quotations about time by famous thinkers and with facts and figures from the pacesetters.

The following pacesetters are portrayed along with quotations. A selection of these:

Daniel Aebersold, Director and Head Physician,
University Hospital for Radiation Oncology, Inselspital Hospital, Berne

"In the field of radiation oncology, a new technology for treating cancer comes onto the market virtually every six months. In principle, there are no limits to this acceleration – our limiting factor here is quality control."

Markus Dürrenmatt, dairy producer and pig farmer, Muri AG

"By bringing in the milking robot at my farm, I have been able to increase milk production by 10 %. The cows can now be milked up to four times a day. This stimulates individual cows to produce more milk."

Valentin Kalt, Head of Marketing for ready-to-cook convenience food, Migros

“Consumers want a product that saves them time. The convenience market is now one of the fastest growing food markets in Switzerland.”

Walter Knobel, Project Leader,
Reengineering Mail Processing (REMA), Swiss Post

“Our machines process 30,000 to 40,000 letters per hour. By hand, a human will manage maybe 1,500 in the same time.”

Stefan Linder, Manager, Profit Center,
Semiconductors ABB Lenzburg

“With the newest semiconductor technology, we can achieve a capacity of around one gigawatt – this roughly equals the capacity of a modern nuclear power station. Compared with the semiconductor technology that was in standard use 10 years ago, this corresponds to a hundredfold increase in capacity.”

Daria Martinoni, Project Leader,
“Future Development of the Railway Infrastructure”, Swiss Federal Railways

“Since the introduction of Rail 2000, we have 20 % more trains in the Swiss Federal Railways network – a train runs every 12 minutes.”

Peter Messmann, Head of Telecommunications,
City of Zurich Electricity Utility

“Data transfer in a fibre optic cable is around a million times faster than the speed of an aeroplane.”

Giorgio Saraco, Head of Marketing and Sales, Vice President,
Scoach (Swiss exchange for structured products)

“On the Swiss Exchange, from 2009 it will be possible to carry out some 3,000 transactions per second. In 1996, it was 45.”

Hansi Voigt, Editor-in-Chief, 20 Minuten Online

“At 20minuten.ch, we are orienting ourselves more and more to reporting in real time.”

nonstop

In a paternoster lift, everyday objects and innovations from the cultural history of acceleration follow their respective paths. Whether a stock cube or Velcro fastener, a pressure cooker or a free "20 Minuten" newspaper, the acceleration is made up of a range of small and tiny accelerators. They have all had just one purpose: that of saving time.

The 41 everyday accelerators chosen for nonstop display the time gained to the exact minute.

life time bar

We are all part of the nonstop society. We save time, we lose time, we have no time or suddenly we in fact have too much of it. We all have a personal story about the speed of life to tell.

The Stapferhaus has selected a representative sample of twenty people to give an account of the pace of their lives. Twenty stories of women and men, young and old, of those who never have time and those who have too much time, stories of time gained and time lost, of times that race by and those that stand still.

The visitors are confronted with a wealth of stories. It is not possible to zap through all of the stories. This is because each individual story is pressed onto a vinyl record. The visitors are forced to choose a selection of stories. A lifetime barmaid or barman helps them decide. They work voluntarily and give up some of their free time to assist the exhibition and its visitors.

The following people give their personal accounts:

Jacqueline Badran, 1961, when fear expands the seconds, Proprietor of Zeix, Agency for Usability and User Education, Municipal Councillor of the City of Zurich

Johanna Bösiger, 2001, why there is no tomorrow and granddad has very little time, primary 2 pupil at Lettenschulhaus School

Esther Csuka, 1966, on minutes that decide, trauma surgeon at Zurich University Hospital

H.R. Fricker, 1947, in the face of death, artist, Trogen

Natascha Gertsch, 1968, family and work and little time, guitarist, music teacher at Olten Cantonal School and Biel Music School, single mother, Berne

Sugey Haller, 1975, two seconds of eye contact, checkout operator at a large supermarket chain in Zurich, born in Costa Rica, in Switzerland for 12 years now

Katharina Hess-Röthlisberger, 1925, on too little time and missed opportunities, former minister's wife and housewife, retired secondary school teacher, now lives in Burgerheim Retirement Home, Berne

Roman Hirsbrunner, 1973, when time pressure makes you creative, CEO of Maxomedia Agency for Crossmedia Communication, Berne

Max Hubacher, 1993, why time stands still at school, pupil, in year 9

Peter Indermaur, 1941, after the rush hour of life, retired, former employee of the Basel City Social Compensation Office

Jakob Iten, 1954, to the rhythm of nature, vegetable grower, Safenwil

Hanna Marti, 1982, why the night hours are twice as long, registered nurse at the Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology Division, Inselspital Hospital, Berne

Kathrin Nadler, 1962, the decision to take time for oneself, Managing Director of Aargau Teachers' Association, Member of the Parliament of the Canton of Aargau, former Lenzburg town councillor

Roland Rasi, 1945, when an empty appointments diary becomes stressful, former bank manager at the Swiss Bank Corporation, now mediator and lawyer, Basel

Hartmut Rosa, 1965, when mountains of work pile up, Professor of Sociology at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena

Mark Saxer, 1945, with Zen into the endlessness of the moment, management consultant, ABP Assessment AG, Zug

Sarah Schmid, 1989, when the hours drag – searching for an apprenticeship for two years now. Participant in a regional work placement programme with the Speranza foundation for jobless young people, Menziken

Christoph Schmutz, 1957, breaking the 45-minute cycle, primary school teacher at Schulhaus Gelbhausgarten School in Schaffhausen

Jie Schneebeli-Chen, 1964, on living in different cultures of time, hotelier, Managing Director, Swiss Road Hotel, Peking. Lives in Freienbach (canton of Schwyz) and Peking

Orlando Z., 1974, on standby in the relaxation area, Systems engineer/IT specialist for a service provider, Lenzburg

Time lab

Time can indeed be measured exactly, but whether time goes fast or slowly depends on one's subjective experience of it. There are thirteen interactive stations in the centre of the exhibition hall, where visitors can explore the phenomenon of time that goes by.

1. start up. What schoolchildren know about time

When we come into the world, we have no notion of time. We first have to learn what today, tomorrow, yesterday, soon, later and past mean. 20 children's drawings provide an insight into primary pupils' notions of time. A touch screen makes apparent the 4 underlying concepts children have in thinking about time.

2. body time.

When the internal and external clocks are not ticking at the same rate All living things have an internal clock which controls many physiological processes. The body and mind of a person are not equally efficient at any one time of day or night. Practical constraints or one's own behaviour affect the internal clock. If one sets the hand of the clock to a certain time, the tension between the internal and external clock becomes visible on the screen.

3. doodle. What an online appointment planner reveals about our culture of time

What an online appointment planner reveals about the culture of time in Switzerland. Behind 8 headings on the screen there are hidden answers to questions, such as: How does it work? For which kinds of occasions do people doodle? How do women and men doodle? How long does it take to find an appointment?

4. full-time. How we spend our lifetime

Women live to 83 years on average, men to 77 years. Thus the average Swiss person lives to be 80. This means he/she lives for 960 months, or 701,976 hours. Quite a bit can be done in this lifetime. But what do we actually get up to in our life, in the days of our life – in each passing hour? At the table, using an overview chart, information can be gained about the time budget of the average Swiss person.

5. countdown. What you will get up to yet, before the end of your life

You can't stop time and you can't speed it up. The clock ticks steadily. And human beings get continually older. Hour by hour, year by year, in the direction of the end of life. A life expectancy calculation confronts the visitor with her/his personal lifetime. The "remaining time" is subtracted and the result printed out on a type of "till receipt". This representation of the time already lived makes people astonished at how many months and weeks one already has under one's belt. And the calculation of the lifespan shows how much lifetime one has still remaining.

6. fast forward. What goes too slow to be seen by the naked eye

Our perception is limited. We can perceive speed only within a restricted range. Everything else is either too slow or too fast for our eyes. By touching or clicking on key words, the screen is freed up for playing a video, showing at speed changes taking place over a long period, so that they are visible to our eye.

7. slow motion. What goes too fast to be seen by the naked eye

By touching or clicking on keywords, the screen is freed up for movements that are too fast for the human eye. The computer shows them slowed down so that they become visible to the naked eye.

8. deadline. When real time sets the pace

What happens when an apple sits on a plate for 1 day, 5 days, 20 days, 40 days? The public become eyewitnesses of real-time decay. Depending on the stage of decay of the object shown, the end point becomes more or less apparent.

9. just-in-time. What your sense of time says

The visitors go through the exhibition without constantly looking at a watch or clock. They walk through a time-free zone. At the table, they find out whether they have estimated the time correctly or wrongly. The results reveal whether they have tended to find the exhibition up to this point interesting, with time flying, or boring, with time dragging.

10. timing. Why time sometimes drags and sometimes flies

“Set in stone” (or etched) and taken from “The Magic Mountain”, Thomas Mann’s lengthy answer to the question as to why time sometimes passes quickly and sometimes slowly.

11. right now. When a moment is savoured then disappears, but can’t be captured in words

The question of the moment and thus also the reminder of the fragility of time and ultimately the finite nature of life is addressed on a philosophical and literary and also playful level. There are hundreds of chocolates waiting and ready to melt in the mouth in a pleasurable instant. The wrapping of these sweet momentary delights brings different thoughts to the moment.

12. high speed. Why seconds have 18 decimal places

Exact measurement of time seems a matter of course to us today. In its most exact form, however, we can no longer conceive of it. A yoctosecond, for example, is a quadrillionth of a second. Capturing these short units of time is the achievement of state-of-the-art technology and, in terms of the history of time measurement, is only a recent phenomenon. A number with 18 decimal places continually dissects a minute into smaller units. Nanoseconds fly by visibly in this way. The table shows how time flies and what ultra-precise time measurement is required for.

13. time out. How the speed society waits

The waiting areas of Swiss Federal Railways look exactly the same at the large Swiss train stations of Berne, Lucerne and Zurich. Waiting in the most usual situation of all is something with an underlying design. The transparency showing the “waiting room” prototype in Berne shows in detail which psychological design considerations lie behind the layout.

check-up

The nonstop society requires breaks. Tension needs relaxation. In the last 20 years, the number of “wellness”, “time out”, “work-life balance”, “self-discovery” and “purging” remedies on offer has increased by leaps and bounds. Therapies respond by countering defects in pace and time. A supersoft wall has 12 marked listening points on it for listening to with a stethoscope. Time therapists, from the yoga teacher to the management consultant and the burnout therapist – all of these people give this society a diagnosis and give visitors time management advice for their lives in the nonstop society.

The following twelve “time therapists” can be listened to:

Bettina Bamert, advisor to retirees (2:41), psychologist, runs pre-retirement preparatory courses dealing with the transition from working to non-working life

Roger Bernet, wellness provider (2:39), CEO of “Aqua-Spa-Resorts” in Berne, runs a Turkish bath facility in Berne and a saltwater pool facility in Schönbühl. Two further facilities are being built and four more are planned

Bernard Brändli, human performance expert (2:38), psychologist, specialist in taking time out and expert in the management of human energy. Coaches individuals and companies on dealing with professional and private stress and exhaustion. Customers include Migros, Swiss Federal Railways, PricewaterhouseCoopers

Sonja A. Buholzer, management consultant (2:32), doctor of philosophy, former bank manager, since 1994 entrepreneur, advises top industry executives and public policymakers on dealing with time pressure. Best-selling author and industry speaker in Europe

Marco Caimi, rehabilitation doctor (2:42), surgeon and psychiatrist, directs a rehabilitation and training centre in Basel, runs seminars on internal company health promotion. Customers include Sony, Swisscom, UBS, Swisslife, Emmi

Karlheinz Geissler, time researcher (2:40), Professor of Economic Education, researches, publishes and speaks Europe-wide on the subject of time, best-selling author, director of the Munich consultancy firm “timesandmore”. Customers include Siemens, Roche, Geberit, GDI, Deutsche Leasing AG, Metadesign

Rolf Heim, burnout specialist (2:29), psychiatrist and psychotherapist with experience in meditation, coach and therapist, primarily to people with burnout

Rosmarie Herczog, yoga instructor (2:32), secondary school teacher and yoga teacher, has taught yoga for 20 years. Director of training for new yoga teachers at the Lotos yoga centres in Basel and Zurich

Mark Riklin, philosopher of time (2:37), sociologist and Swiss representative of the Society for the Deceleration of Time, organises events in public spaces

Lothar Seiwert, time consultant (2:29), proprietor of the Seiwert Institute for Time Management and Life Leadership in Heidelberg, author of numerous bestsellers on time and life management, active globally as a coach, speaker and seminar organiser. Customers include DaimlerChrysler, Degussa, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Telekom, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Motorola, Porsche, REWE, SAP, UBS

Katarina Stanoevska-Slabeva, communications expert (2:41), professor at the Institute for Media and Communications Management at the University of St. Gallen, specialising in digital communications. Her responsibilities include overseeing collaborative projects with companies

Rosmarie Weibel, health coach (2:35), business administrator, bioenergetics practitioner and qigong instructor, lecturer at the APAMED Professional College (for complementary medicine), globally active as a seminar organiser and speaker on health and stress management and self empowerment training. Customers include Hewlett Packard, Balgrist University Hospital, SKO (Swiss Organisation of Leading Executives), Lilienberg Entrepreneur Forum, World Spirit Forum Arosa

real time

The nonstop society is living at a faster and faster pace. This impression is not wrong, but it is one-sided. It blocks the view of the reality of slowness. Slow paces of life are part of the same society.

The space shows in film images slow everyday moments in real time: an old person walking, a child learning to tie laces, disabled people at work.

The following people are shown:

Aylina Gisi, putting on her jacket, Purzelhuus Nursery, Lenzburg

Lukas Kästli, preparing a consignment for dispatch,
Disabled Persons Foundation, Lenzburg

Simone Mezzancella, copying, Marktmatten Kindergarten, Lenzburg

Alba Mousson, cutting out a Christmas star, Marktmatten Kindergarten,
Lenzburg

Roger Schmucki, putting on a shirt, Lenzburg

Hanspeter Soland and **Hans Wildi**, preparing advertising material, Disabled
Persons Foundation, Lenzburg

Oskar Volkmar-Frei and **Herbert Welti**, walking to lunch and back at the
Senior Citizens' Centre,
Lenzburg

fire play

We are going about things fast. Too fast? Or in fact still too slowly? Do we still have the fire under control? Does it need more oxygen or a fire extinguisher? What's the situation with our own pace of life and where is our speed society heading? The answers to this can be found in the bright red "Fire Play Tower", which towers in splendour over the exhibition like a control room.

Stapferhaus Lenzburg has asked eight experts about the pace of our society and received very different answers, ranging from the firm belief that we are still too slow to the credible explanation that our society is on the brink of speed-induced collapse. The answers are displayed on eight fire extinguishers.

The following experts advise the fire extinguisher as a matter of urgency:

"We are running out of time, we are threatened with temporal collapse"

Hartmut Rosa, Professor of Sociology, Friedrich Schiller University of Jena; author (including the title "High-Speed Society")

"The fast pace of scientific, economic and technologic change is systematically overstraining the time structures and time perspectives of democratic politics and procedures of the constitutional state."

Klaus-Michael Kodalle, Professor Emeritus of Practical Philosophy, University of Jena, co-editor of the book "Rasender Stillstand" ("Racing standstill")

"The devil invented haste", runs a Turkish proverb. If it is correct, then we live in a truly satanic era. To escape the infernal bustle, one has to become so like hell that one no longer notices the infernal nature of it or else one has to look in the midst of hell and find what isn't hell and give it a right to exist and space."

Marianne Gronemeyer, Professor of Educational Sciences, Wiesbaden University of Applied Sciences

Those who advise being careful with fire:

"A life governed by time according to the principle that time is money knows no "enough" – it just keeps on going. And if we calculate time in terms of money, we humans are lost. It is time for pausing in the rushing current of acceleration: benches instead of banks – greenery instead of gold!"

Karlheinz Geissler, time researcher and economics educationist, directs the Munich consultancy firm timesandmore

“The acceleration of the modern age is an ambivalent phenomenon. Haste and time pressure can, on the one hand, have a negative impact on health. On the other hand, many also utterly relish the acceleration of the modern age.”

Wolfgang H.R. Miltner, Professor of Biology and Clinical Psychology, University of Jena

The following advise adding even more fire:

“By the time we get working on something in Europe, the Americans and Chinese have already done it. We react, but we don’t act. We are too slow.”

Alfred Speer, Professor of Architecture at the Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences, proprietor of the architectural and urban planning firm “Albert Speer & Partner GmbH” in Frankfurt am Main. Projects include one in the Chinese industrial metropolis of Changchun.

“One can’t simply apply the brakes to the speed of life. It is also not so bad to be going from A to B rapidly. One just has to withdraw from the strict pace of life now and then.”

Wilhelm Schmid, independent philosopher, Extraordinary Professor of Philosophy at the University of Erfurt

“Since people want to keep earning more and more, all processes are running ever faster and more productively. We economists don’t believe that one can stop this progress. We are much more concerned with how one can work even more productively and save time within ever-scarcer time.”

Bruno S. Frey, Professor of Economics at the University of Zurich

An interactive test with questions sheds light on the degree of speed in one’s own life.

It evaluates the answers and tells the visitors what the situation is with their own pace of life. It gives them a piece of advice to take with them as to which exhibition point they should not miss if they want to improve their pace of life. The test results make the bright red space with its large windows light up differently depending on the result, bathing the entire exhibition space by turns in different shades of orange.

open end

The visitors emerge from their experience of grappling with time. A staircase leads to the attic, which becomes the storeroom for their time wishes and dreams. A poetic, dreamy place, far away in emotional terms from the nonstop and speed society, which can be explored individually with torches.

Here, everyone gives their own answers and these answers to the crucial questions about one's own life are on view to all: What would you like to have more time for? What are the best moments of your life? What do you definitely still want to experience? What do you never have enough time for in your life?

The answers are set down on paper and are on view for other visitors as part of the exhibition.