

Brachling zur Ausstellung: ZKM (Hrsg.), 2005

Politics is about ~~the~~ public matters, res publica.

But what are res, things?
matters? how to
things into public
matters? how do
things get public?
What is public or
what in the public
What is = res publice
when it is not
never about how
we make things
public?

Making Things Public - Atmospheres of Democracy (2008) Bruno Latour & Peter Weibel

We live in rather discouraging times as far as political life is concerned. This is why it might be a good occasion to rethink what politics is about. The idea of this book -and of the show how of which it grew- is that politics is about *things*. It's not a sphere, a profession, and occupation only but mainly a concern for things which are brought to the attention of a *public*. The public is not given once and for all, it's not the people to be represented by its elected officials. In the formulations of the great American pragmatists Walter Lippmann and John Dewey, the public is to be made for each new issue, each new matter of concern. So the question we wish to raise is: 'What would happen if politics was made to turn around disputed things?' As soon as we raise this question we realize that there are many other types of assemblies which are not political in the usual sense, but which gather a public around things: scientific laboratories, technical projects, supermarkets, financial arenas, churches and the disputed questions of natural resources like rivers, landscapes, animals, temperature and air. It turns out that the oldest meaning of the English word for 'thing' is precisely an assembly made around disputed matters of concern. With the help of more than one hundred authors from all walks of life, this book and the show tries to reconstruct such a Thing. Instead of looking for democracy only in the official 'sphere' of professional politics, it draws attention to the new *atmospheric conditions* allowing for things to be *made public*. It shows that the repertoire of attitudes and passions that we associate with taking a political stand is much too narrow. There exist in other non-Western traditions, in the old political philosophies, in our own science and technology, in the new web based spaces, in the many techniques of representation of which Parliaments are only a part, many other ways to react politically. ~~Yes, in bad times, we should become able to say: 'Back to things!'~~

and response to things.

that is new representations, mediations, technologies, interfaces, networks, platforms, assembly of assemblies,
politics of things, Dingpolitik happens, when objects turn into things, when ~~things~~ ^{interests} turn into issues, when matters of fact turn into matters of concern.
For all of us.