

***Luca Frei, The Sun 24 Hours***

**By Patricia Bieder**

From the exhibition catalogue *Zeit verstreichen. Moment und Dauer in der Gegenwartskunst*, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, 20.08.2016 – 30.10.2016.

The installation *The Sun 24 Hours* makes clear that time always stands in a specific yet changing frame of reference. Sixty hourglasses stand on a six-meter-long metal frame, allowing visitors to turn them. By massing the hourglasses, the installation undermines the notion of an absolute time. With the invitation to literally "take time in one's hands," the work reflects society's use of time as a "resource."

Time is presented as a commodity on the stand's shelves, which the artist bought second-hand and which, in its natural appearance, could just as easily be found in a cellar. Time as an economic good is emphasized by the title borrowed from the Italian financial newspaper "Il Sole 24 Ore". As chance would have it, the hourglasses - wrapped in sheets of this newspaper - were delivered to the artist. The cardboard boxes used to transport goods on the lowest shelves emphasize time as a commodity. Their "Fragile" imprint also points to the fragility of their "cargo": time as a precious, individual good that must be used wisely.

"Turning the hourglass" also means coming to terms with one's lifetime. As a symbol of transience, the hourglass reminds us of the shortness of life and the need to make good use of time. The hourglass was first depicted in 1338 in the fresco *Allegory of Good Government* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, in the hands of the temperantia, the cardinal virtue of moderation.