

Isabell Lorey

Precarization, Indebtedness, Giving Time

We are experiencing a proliferation of work into life and at the same time an increasing de-waging of work. Work time transfers into life time. Subjectivation and social relations become productive and exploited. The exchange of knowledge, communication and affect are more and more economized while lifelong jobs are replaced by enforced lifelong learning. Precarization and indebtedness turn out to be the engine of productivity. If many forms of work can now be said to mean the capability to communicate and establish social relationships, what is the fate of existing (art) institutions? When production becomes social, when the precarious are always running out of time, the refusal of work is getting harder and harder. What are the effects, therefore, of Maria Eichhorn giving time off to Chisenhale's staff?

Drawing on her research on the growing gap between work and wage, and an implosion of the tension between work and subjectivation, Lorey will draw on interviews conducted by Eichhorn with Chisenhale staff in a lecture on the economical meanings of giving time and the possible breaks with these logics of exchange.

Stewart Martin

Forms of Life

The work of art has been withdrawn, seemingly. And what would have been hidden has been drawn into view. So here we are, looking at what can be seen now. But the experience we have undergone has exposed more than what appears here, since what appears now has been drawn out from what is hidden. And so we might be inspired to look again. Art seems bound to appear as a work that obscures the work that produced it. But the concern that art would cease to exist without this obscuration speaks of a more urgent need than the conservation of art as such: the freedom from work that art pictures in its very durability. Is this freedom nothing more than a picture, or perhaps a pause after which we must return to work? Or is it simply a change from one form of work to another?

Martin will consider Maria Eichhorn's work within the context of contemporary capitalist culture, and approach the latter from the perspective of a transformation of the classical differentiation of forms of life, especially the differentiation of labour, work, politics and thinking; that is, a transformation in which all forms of life are oriented towards, if not collapsed into, labour. The character of this transformation is the scene of considerable controversy, both over how it should be understood and, therefore, how a critique or overcoming of capitalist culture should be conceived. Martin will not attempt to resolve this controversy so much as orientate it towards a consideration of contemporary art, or, more specifically, certain gestures at figuring art's contemporaneity in radical 'withdrawal'. How should we understand such gestures as responses to the predicament of capitalist culture? How do these artistic withdrawals relate to a withdrawal of labour?