

Work in Progress. Utopian Rest

Auditory rest and exhibition opening

18 March 2023, 16.00.

Exhibition on view till 7 April 2023

Participating: **Vesna Bukovec, Tia Čiček, Ana Čigon**

Long-term artistic and curatorial research on the topic of work, reflection on the conditions of knowledge exchange and the search for alternative social and organizational arrangements have their beginnings in the creating of the exhibition, which was first shown in November 2022 in the Škuc Gallery. Through cooperation, we are looking for answers to the questions: Where do we go from here? What kind of future can we imagine and plan for? How to establish and maintain a connected and solidary community? Do we know how to cooperate and how do we have to adapt and shape ourselves and society so that we can cooperate better? etc. In an effort to understand the current approach to work itself and the role it plays within the current social order, during the preparations for the exhibition we created a reading group with the aim of sharing knowledge and reading literature related to the theory of work, care, postcolonialism, labor movements, etc. We wanted to unlearn the hierarchy of values that put the product above the process, and productivity and profit above the person.¹

The desire to find alternative ways of working and living was soon replaced by the need to unlearn patterns of work and adopt other ways of receiving, sharing and constructing knowledge. Thus, our position of searching for ideal forms, which in itself indicates a neoliberal and above all inherent striving for “perfection”, was replaced by the principle of openness, adaptation and acceptance – in the final phase even recovery – which we understand as central on the way to restructuring a harmful value system.

Work in Progress is a fluid process that is created with the desire for a better understanding of one’s own relationship to work and community, as well as with an interest in other and/or different experiences, attitudes and practices. Through mutual cooperation, we want to highlight the precarious or dangerous social situation into which the modern worker is pushed. The exhibition of drawings opens up a space for reflection on the personal hardships of today’s precarious workers, the wishes and demands for a more tolerable life and a fairer social order. It also touches on past labor struggles and the achievements of local labor organizing, as well as the personal engagement of women in various protests for social change around the world.

As part of events and exhibitions, we establish libraries with diverse humanistic literature that support the process of unlearning unjust and harmful work structures and learning about alternatives. In the video trade unionist Tea Jarc (Youth Plus Trade Union), Svetlana Slapšak (retired professor, classical philologist, anthropologist and writer) and Jadranka Vesel (Rise,

¹ We would like to thank the following for participating in the reading circle: Elvis Krstulović, Iva Kovač, Miha Kelemina and Urška Aplinc.

Research Institute for Social Economy) generously shared their views on work, the contemporary worker, community and the future.²

As part of *BREZODRA* (Nagib) we are preparing a performative reading with the aim of resting during the day's activities. The English text was created according to our instructions with the help of AI. It draws from selected passages of well-known fiction, especially science fiction literature and humanistic texts. Participants and workers are invited to relax while listening to gentle, sometimes radical, thoughts about utopian worlds and communities that live beyond the capabilities of our environment and social arrangements.³

Work in Progress points to the need to rethink current forms of work and activity and to recognise, internalise and challenge certain patterns of behaviour and oppression. Ways of recovery and empowerment can be seen in knowledge sharing, community building and the creation of new living and working conditions. The dismantling of the existing hierarchy of values, which neglects the worker in favour of profit and false "progress", can be seen as the key to creating a more just world.

Vesna Bukovec, Tia Čiček, Ana Čigon

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Organization: Društvo za kulturno produkcijo in afirmacijo umetniških procesov NAGIB, GT22/Fundacija Sonda

² At the exhibition in the Škuc Gallery, we prepared a discussion about [labour](#) and [communities](#), artist and writer Andrea Knezović prepared [Nocturnalities: Bargaining Beyond Rest | Full night artistic research event](#) about institutional interruptions, focused on the phenomena of sleep and rest, which we contemplate through performative forms of work.

³ For the science fiction literary suggestions, we thank [Marie Andrée-Pellerin](#), for kindly sharing with us her database of sources created as part of her doctoral research.