

Precarity

CURATED BY LORELEI STEWART

Dushko Petrovich

Adjunct Commuter Weekly, 2015–ongoing

Installation with newspaper, website, video, and documents, dimensions variable

Courtesy the publisher

In July 2015, artist, writer, and editor Dushko Petrovich launched *Adjunct Commuter Weekly*. Begun as a print publication, *Adjunct Commuter Weekly*, succumbed after one issue to the financial and temporal realities of adjunct life and was re-launched as a multimedia platform hosted at www.adjunctcommuterweekly.com. Still serving the “rapidly growing demographic” of commuting adjunct professors, the project provides resources, entertainment, and a platform for those forced to work in, as the American Association of University Professors puts it, “insecure, unsupported positions with little job security and few protections for academic freedom.”

BFAMFAPhD with Dia Felix

Artists Report Back, 2014

Video, 6:45 min.

Courtesy the artist

BFAMFAPhD (Contributors Susan Jahoda, Emilio Martinez Poppe, Caroline Woolard)

Of Supply Chains, 2015

Cards, website, and syllabi

Courtesy the artists

Of Supply Chains is a free resource for educators that can be used in classroom, exhibition, and workshop contexts to analyze and reimagine power relationships in the arts. The text, workbook, and card game are tools that prompt investigations into the lifecycle of projects—the ways materials are sourced, how the labor for producing a project is organized, how tools are accessed, how an artwork is supported, copyrighted, narrated, encountered, acquired, and how it finally departs, ready for another life cycle. *Of Supply Chains* offers the vocabulary of supply chains to articulate the politics of production behind any

project. When the whole supply chain is discussed, a wide range of choices for organizing work, compensating workers, and producing projects becomes visible and open to contestation. Additional texts, presentations, and syllabi are online at: <http://bfamfaphd.com>.

BFAMFAPhD (Susan Jahoda)

... in which nothing can be finally paid off, 2014

Printed paper

Courtesy the artists

... in which nothing can be finally paid off is a glossary of loan terms* pertaining to contracts that are signed to go into debt for BFA, MFA, or arts-related PhD degrees. This project aims to draw attention to the burden of laws and legal agreements that underpin lending and collection for higher education in the United States and the disproportionate benefits given to lending institutions versus the skills and economic advantages enabled by arts degrees.

*see BFAMFAPhD.com for Glossary and source material

BFAMFAPhD

Key Findings (Percentage of Working Artists and Arts Graduates), 2014

Digital prints

Courtesy the artists

Mutually Exclusive Race and Ethnicity for Total Population and Artists 2012, U.S., 2014

Digital prints

Courtesy the artists

Sex for Total Population and Artists U.S. 2012, 2014

Digital prints

Courtesy the artists

Christian Nagler

A Socialist's Worst Nightmare, 2016

Performance and installation with furniture and plants, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist

This installation is the set for a performance that recreates a televised 1979 Phil Donahue interview with Nobel laureate economist, Milton Friedman, considered by many as the U.S. “father” of neoliberalism. Highlighting some of Friedman’s surprisingly contradictory positions, Nagler’s performance as Friedman focuses on the economist’s public presence in which his manner and mode of argumentation speak to our current political moment and its forms of populism.

Occupy Museums (Noah Fischer, Tal Beery, Imani Brown, Arthur Polendo, Kenneth Pietrobono) along with exhibiting artists Melinda Laszczynski, Ronald L. Jones, Leslie Guzman, A.M. Schaer, Iva Kinnaird, James Scheuren, Levi Rosen, Kurt A. Hill, Jr.

Debtfair Bundle (\$333,455.11 collective debt), 2015

Digital print, website, and paper print

Courtesy the artists

Debtfair is an ongoing artistic campaign to expose the relationship between economic inequality in the art market and artists’ growing debt burdens, exploring the idea that all spaces function with a layer just below the surface. The Debtfair collective was formed in New York as part of Occupy Museums, the branch of the Occupy movement that targets economic inequalities in the art world.

Recreated from Debtfair’s 2015 exhibit at Art League Houston, is one of five bundles consisting of artworks by artists who have similar experiences regarding their own personal debt or economic standing. The collective value of the works within each bundle are equal to the artists’ collective monthly debt. The price of each bundle was compounded daily at an interest rate relative to the shared experience of the artists in a given bundle.

Ahmet Öğüt

Day After Debt: A Call for Student Loan Relief, 2014–present

Contract and sculptures by collaborating artists

Contract courtesy the artist

Troubled by the rampant debt culture that has developed around higher education in the United States, Kurdish artist Ahmet Ögüt has enlisted leading contemporary artists to produce imaginative responses to this crisis and the pressures it places upon graduates. *Day After Debt* is a long-term counter-finance strategy initiated by Ahmet Ögüt in collaboration with Strike Debt's Rolling Jubilee, now The Debt Collective with specially commissioned works by Natascha Sadr Haghigian, Dan Perjovschi, Martha Rosler, and Superflex along with a letter of agreement, drafted by Ögüt and art lawyer Daniel McClean, for potential buyers of the works on display.

These sculptures function as collection points for public contributions to The Debt Collective, a new organization developed out of Strike Debt, that leverages collective power by offering debtors a shared platform for organization, advocacy, and direct action. The Debt Collective supports debt strikers and their movement for debt cancellation and free, quality education for all. In line with the conceptual foundations of much of Ögüt's artistic practice, *Day After Debt* engages a timely issue that affects a large swath of the population.

Day After Debt was commissioned by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University and Mari Spirito, Protocinema.

Natascha Sadr Haghigian

Donation Tower (former value \$10,000), part of Day After Debt: A Call for Student Loan Relief, 2014

Shredded US currency, approximately 63 x 15 3/4 x 7 7/8 in.)

Courtesy the artist and König Galerie

Dan Perjovschi

Bag It!, part of Day After Debt: A Call for Student Loan Relief, 2014

Plastic bag and text, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist

Martha Rosler

Coin Vortex for Student Debt, part of Day After Debt: A Call for Student Loan Relief, 2014

Metal funnel with vinyl, 50 3/4 x 40 1/2 x 36 in.

Edition 1 of 3

Courtesy the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Superflex

Academic Square Cap upside down, part of *Day After Debt: A Call for Student Loan Relief*, 2014

Fabric, glue, and thread, 3 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.

Courtesy the artist

PrecariCorps

Helping Adjuncts Flyers, 2016

Digital prints, 11 x 8.5 x 3 in.

Courtesy the artist

Wall of the Invisible Army, 2016

Photographic prints and typographical design, each 10 x 8 x 3 in.

Courtesy the artist

PrecariCorps (Kat Jacobsen, Creative Director)

Adjunct Athena, 2014

Digital print, 20 x 16 x 3 in.

Courtesy the artist

Invisible, 2015

Digital print, 14 x 11 x 3 in.

Courtesy the artist

Spotlight, 2015

Digital print, 11 x 14 x 3 in.

Courtesy the artist

PrecariCorps is a 501(c)(3) that seeks to improve the lives of contingent faculty through charitable support, research, educational media distribution, and public

awareness. PrecariCorps's multimedia efforts detail how academic labor functions in order to encourage a broader public understanding of how colleges budget their financial resources as well as what effects these budgetary practices have on faculty populations, student populations, and the general value of higher education.

Cassie Thornton

Mystery Hands, 2016

Installation, printed book, and audio tour

Courtesy the artist

Mystery Hands is a children's book and an immersive installation for children to learn about the financialization of their world so they can imagine alternatives—"before their imaginations are turned into financial instruments," Thornton proposes.

Within the context of the current financial crisis of the Chicago Public Schools, the book and the installation present debt as a monster of the adult imagination for appraisal by children. How does a child experience debt? As Thornton says, "being raised and instructed by the scared silence of overleveraged adults with no time for play, with diminished access to basic material needs, while being served a bankrupt education, kids are expected to somehow become *the future*." Instead of the specter of financialized debt silently coloring their lives and closing their schools, this project invites children to look at debt and what it does to adults, the people who design school systems based on debt.

Artist Cassie Thornton conducted hypnotic debt visualization exercises with many adults affected by the crisis, including parents, teachers, principals, bankers, and activists. These images of financial crisis generated the raw materials for a series of illustrated or built dreamscapes which present debt in its fullest form: as an immeasurable, ungovernable, and invisible force that shapes and contours individual, community, city, and state behaviors and priorities. So far, debt has been the excuse for closed schools, underpaid teachers, decimated communities and the creation of an austere market-driven idea of childhood. Thornton ask,

“But what might children make of it, if we finally trusted them where adults have failed?”

Vanessa Viruet and Julia Arredondo of Vice Versa Press

Botanica Dinero, 2016

Installation and performance, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artists

Botanica Dinero was created in response to, *Student Debt Suicide Letters*, a workshop that Viruet and Arredondo hosted, during which participants shared feelings of hopelessness mixed with bittersweet but humorous ways of struggling with and surviving student debt. The included handmade products are intended to help debtors ritually exorcise the despair of debt.

During gallery hours, 10am to 6pm, on Wednesday, July 14 the artists will be on site, selling objects from *Botanica Dinero*.