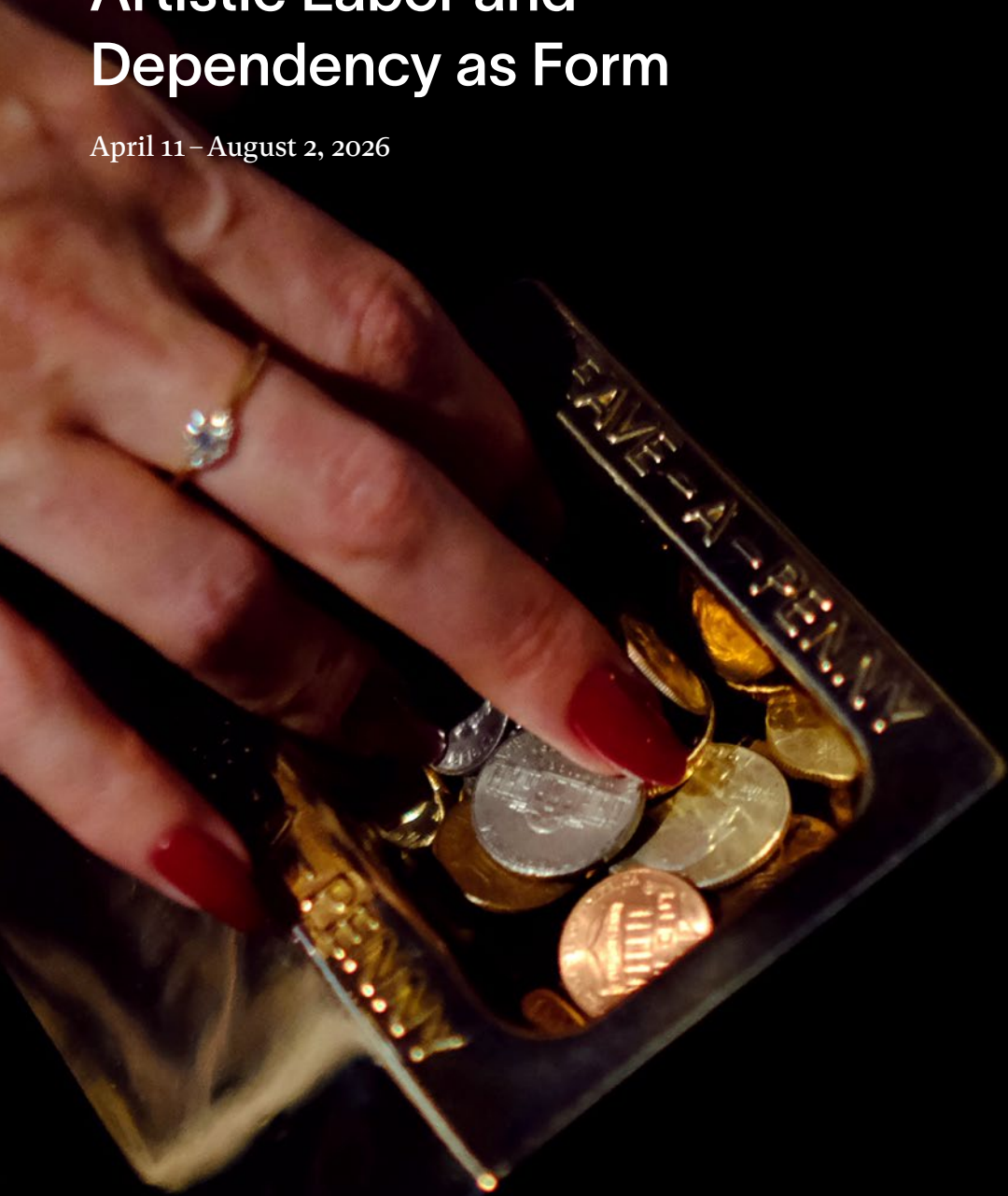


# Performing Conditions: Artistic Labor and Dependency as Form

April 11 – August 2, 2026



# Performing Conditions: Artistic Labor and Dependency as Form

April 11 – August 2, 2026

Hayden, Reference, and Bakalar Galleries

A group exhibition examining the vexed relationships between art, labor, debt, and dependency.

The artists in *Performing Conditions* engage many landscapes of labor: plantations and museums, hospitals and factories, studios and households. But their artworks could all be said to refuse the myth of art's autonomy: its putative freedom from history, politics, and the social conditions of its making. Instead, they dramatize art's networks of debt and dependency, two terms that resonate across the porous boundaries of Marxism, the Black radical tradition, socialist feminism, and disability studies.

Just as a contract requires a cosignatory to exert its force and a score relies on a performer for its realization, many of the artworks in the exhibition are incomplete on their own. They lean on something else or someone else. These dependent forms—delegated and contractually composed performances, historically charged readymades and reproductions, reenactments of the past and rehearsals for the future—owe a debt to the world: as incalculable and unpayable as our debts to each other, or to our mothers.

Accumulation of surplus value creates a different kind of unpayable debt. As Constantina Zavitsanos and Park McArthur

have noted, "A distinction must be made between the constitutive dependency of the capitalist (as nothing other than the expropriation of labor) and the dependency of everyone." Likewise, even as debt has long been a means of racialized dispossession—from sharecropping to subprime mortgages, from student loans to structural adjustments—it is also an ineluctable fact of social life, an ongoing sharing of needs and abilities. Rather than disavowing debts and dependencies, the works in this exhibition seek to proliferate them, elaborating a rich formal and conceptual language of heteronomy and contingency, service and support, leaning and needing.

*Performing Conditions* focuses largely on artworks made in the years following Occupy Wall Street (2011), a period marked by global uprisings against racial and imperial violence, as well as a surge of labor organizing and unionization efforts in US arts and educational institutions. Formed amid the very conditions it critiques, *Performing Conditions* aims to refine the analytical tools we need for collective refusal of capitalist enclosure and extraction.



Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P. Reverie—“B” Suite*, 1977/2011

Front cover:  
Constantina Zavitsanos, *LEAVE – A – PENNY / TAKE – A – PENNY*, 2024. Photo: Destiny Mata

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## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

**Elizabeth Catlett**

**Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de  
Plantation Congolaise (CATPC)**

**Blondell Cummings**

**Jeneen Frei Njootli, Gabrielle  
L'Hirondelle Hill, Chandra  
Melting Tallow, and Tania Willard**

**Sophia Giovannitti**

**Goldin+Senneby**

**Irena Haiduk**

**Sidsel Meineche Hansen**

**Chauncey Hare**

**Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill**

**Yazan Khalili**

**Autumn Knight**

**Carolyn Lazard**

**Ghislaine Leung**

**Reba Maybury**

**Senga Nengudi**

**Adrian Piper**

**Joshua Schwebel**

**Dread Scott**

**Xaviera Simmons**

**Cally Spooner**

**Ced'art Tamasala**

**Cassie Thornton**

**Constantina Zavitsanos**

**Artur Żmijewski**

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*Performing Conditions: Artistic Labor and Dependency as Form* is organized by Natalie Bell and Ramona Ngin.

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## AUDIO + DIGITAL GUIDE



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# Elizabeth Catlett

*I have given the world my songs, 1947*

From the series *The Black Woman*



*I have given the world my songs, 1947*

Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012) made this print shortly after arriving in Mexico City to join the Taller de Gráfica Popular, a radical artist collective and print workshop. The workshop used inexpensive techniques and accessible imagery to bring its leftist message to working-class Mexicans. It often developed its imagery in collaboration with others. “People would come to the workshop if they had problems: if students were on strike; or trade unions had labor disputes, or if peasants had problems with their land, they would come into the workshop and ask for something to express their concerns,” Catlett once reflected. She drew on techniques she learned there to make *The Black Woman* (1946–47), a series of fifteen linocuts that trace an ongoing history of the titular figure, from notable personages like Phyllis Wheatley to archetypal images of Black female laborers.

With *I have given the world my songs* (1947), the series’ portrayal of sharecroppers and domestic workers is joined by an image of artistic labor, albeit one that exceeds the typical frame of professionalization or waged work. The print shows a seated woman cradling a guitar, singing in the shadow of racial terror. It centers Black women’s labor as a collective creative force; yet, the title begs the question: Are these songs given or stolen? After showing *The Black Woman* at a gallery in Washington, DC, in 1947, Catlett rightfully grew concerned that her Communist sympathies would incur trouble from the US government. During the ensuing McCarthyist years, she was subject to extended FBI and CIA surveillance, deemed an “undesirable alien,” and denied entry to the country of her birth for nearly a decade.

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# Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise

*The Judgement of the White Cube*, 2023

*White Cube Lusanga* by Ced'art Tamasala and Jean Kawata, 2023

## Ced'art Tamasala of CATPC

Untitled, 2018



*The Judgement of the White Cube*, 2023 (still)

04

Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC) is an artist collective based in Lusanga (formerly Leverville), a village in Congo that was the center of a palm oil plantation owned by Unilever—a corporation that, more recently, has sponsored large-scale commissions of contemporary art at museums like Tate Modern in London. CATPC's practice reverses the asymmetrical flows of labor, art, commodities, and debt between the Global North and the Global South, and between white-cube museums and plantation workers, whose exploitation has enabled the institutions' existence. Ced'art Tamasala's untitled drawing (2018), for example, depicts how the production of their artworks is imbricated in a global division of labor and its violent technologies of extraction, logistics, and finance.

Since its founding in 2014, the collective has exploited and redirected these systems for its own ends. Members of CATPC make sculptures from river mud, which are then digitally scanned and refabricated abroad using materials associated with plantation

economies, including cocoa and palm oil. The collective uses proceeds from the sale of its artworks in the Global North to purchase land for sustainable agroforestry in Lusanga. Even as it reverses colonial transfers of land and resources, CATPC also relocates the site of critique and artistic discourse to the exhausted plantation itself. In 2017, in collaboration with the artist Renzo Martens and the architecture firm OMA, CATPC built a sleek gallery space in the Congolese village—the White Cube. This "Repatriation of the White Cube," as they called it, is both a conceptual gesture and an ongoing act of repair.

CATPC's recent work has examined the history of *Balot*, a sacred power figure that depicts Maximilien Balot, the Belgian colonial official killed during the 1930s Pende revolt. The sculpture now sits in the collection of Richmond's Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. In CATPC's sculpture *White Cube Lusanga* (2023), the top of *Balot* is shown among other looted African objects imprisoned in the museums of various metropolises; the scenes along its edges narrate the history of the village from the colonial era to the present. In the video *The Judgement of the White Cube* (2023), the museum is performatively put on trial for its crimes. Following a recitation of grievances and debts, the white cube is judged guilty and punished with a lashing of palm fronds. Palm oil runs down the exterior walls, forever staining the supposed neutrality of the space. At the video's conclusion, the spirit of the white cube bursts out of the building and breaks down crying, promising to return the sculpture, the land—everything.

# Blondell Cummings

*Chicken Soup*, 1981

*Basic Strategies IV*, 1985



*Commitment: Two Portraits*, 1988 (still)

Blondell Cummings (1944–2015) combined postmodern dance's interest in pedestrian movement with deep attention to the gestures of Black labor and sociality. Her most well-known work, *Chicken Soup* (1981), is a paean to the ancestral and inherited labor of Black women, what art historian Sampada Aranke describes as "a semiotics of the kitchen that Martha Rosler could never have imagined herself." By turns flowing and staccato, it references childhood memories of Cummings's mother and grandmother working in the kitchen. Part of an evening-length work called *Food for Thought* (1983), the original fifteen-minute dance incorporated the text of a chicken soup recipe, writings by Grace Paley and Pat Steir, and music by Brian Eno, Meredith Monk, and Collin Walcott. The abbreviated version on view here was recorded for television in 1988 as part of the PBS program *Alive from Off Center*.

*Performing Conditions* also features footage of a rehearsal of *Basic Strategies IV* (1985), created in collaboration with the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble. Across the five *Basic Strategies* pieces, Cummings worked with dancers to develop choreography based on their first jobs and their experiences with money. A through line is a sequence of incantatory singing: "For love or for money, for love or for money, for love or for money." *Basic Strategies IV* premiered in Aspen, Colorado, and was later performed at the Riverside Church, New York, with music by Michael Riesman and voiceover by the choreographer Ralph Lemon. The rehearsal footage foregrounds the collective labor of dance itself: The soundtrack is provided by Cummings's encouraging instructions to the dancers, and her gesturing arm occasionally pierces the corner of the frame. "The act of doing [a dance] might be a solo, but the sharing of the information is definitely not," Cummings once said. "To me, choreography is always an act of sharing."

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# Jeneen Frei Njootli, Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, Chandra Melting Tallow, and Tania Willard

*Coney Island Baby*, 2018



*Coney Island Baby*, 2018 (still)

*Coney Island Baby* (2018) depicts these four artists learning to snare rabbits, a traditionally feminized form of subsistence labor, alongside the other forms of care work (cooking, cleaning, childcare) that supported this endeavor. It was made at BUSH Gallery, a collective space founded in Secwepemcúlecw, “out on the land . . . at the margins of monetary systems and away from the colonized space of art institutions.” With projects like this one, BUSH Gallery seeks to unmake the presumed hierarchy between artistic work and less legible forms of land-based and reproductive practice.

The film’s title riffs on the word “coney,” an archaic term for “rabbit” from which

the words “cunny” and “cunt” are derived. The artists reclaim this association with denigrated femininity, and *Coney Island Baby* is attuned to forms of labor that are likewise derogated or erased. Its fragmented form indexes the needs that conditioned its making, from a participating artist’s disability to frequent pauses for childcare, rest, and play. The film’s glimpses of land and shared sustenance are further mediated by circular frames drawn from *Looney Tunes* cartoons and Chandra Melting Tallow’s reverberating score. Across its fleeting vignettes, the film continually blurs the edges between the productive and the reproductive, the creative and the procreative.

# Sophia Giovannitti

*Contract: Choreography 1*, 2022

*Confession Prototype 1*, 2025

*Contract*, 2026



*Contract: Choreography 1*, 2022. Performance: Duplex, New York. Photo: Daniel Arnold

Sophia Giovannitti examines how ideas of contracts and consent structure our lives, from routine interpersonal and economic relationships to liberalism’s foundational metaphor of the social contract. Her performances use contractual infrastructures against themselves, staging how they are subverted and exceeded by desires and drives. As psychoanalyst Avgi Saketopoulou has written, “Consent negotiations always involve more than we think we bargained for.”

For *Confession Prototype 1* (2025), for instance, viewers were admitted only after signing a nondisclosure agreement (NDA), a type of contract used by powerful individuals and entities to compel silence, often following incidents of sexual malfeasance. The recording of the performance on view here can only be heard upon signing a similar agreement (headphones are provided in exchange). While the NDA offers an illusion of security for the disclosure of sensitive information, Giovannitti explains, it cannot offer her freedom. “But I don’t perform to feel free,” she says at the lecture’s conclusion.

“I perform to inhabit an intense and malleable power relation; I perform when I want to be looked at a certain way; I perform when I want something to happen, in real time, something out of my grasp alone. I perform when I require other people and they require me.”

From May 5–10, Giovannitti presents a new iteration of her performance *Contract* (2022–ongoing), which attempts to antagonize entrenched power dynamics between artists and those who collect, curate, patronize, exploit, and visit them. Giovannitti will occupy the List Center’s Bakalar gallery for six days, working within it on her forthcoming memoir. The gallery will be closed to the public, save for those who pay around \$1,000 to enter into a choreography with her. “The artist’s private sphere, de facto a site of extraction, becomes a site of negotiation,” Giovannitti notes. “Debts are incurred and traded. Nothing is forgiven.” A score from the performance’s previous iteration, at New York’s Duplex gallery, is on view in the exhibition.

# Goldin+Senneby

M&A, 2013



08 M&A, 2013. Performance: SBC Gallery, La Biennale de Montréal, 2014. Photo: Guy L'Heureux

Goldin+Senneby's *M&A* (2013) stages, in the most literal sense, its own performing conditions. During gallery hours, a single actor continuously rehearses a script. The project's production budget is invested in an opaque trading algorithm, developed with investment banker Paul Leong, which speculates on corporate mergers and acquisitions (or, in business jargon, "M&A"). The duration of the work is determined by the algorithm's performance: When the invested sum is depleted, the actor's contract ends, leaving the props and traces of the performance in the gallery as evidence of his unemployment.

*M&A* is drawn from a larger body of Goldin+Senneby's work that considers the absurd alchemy and violence of

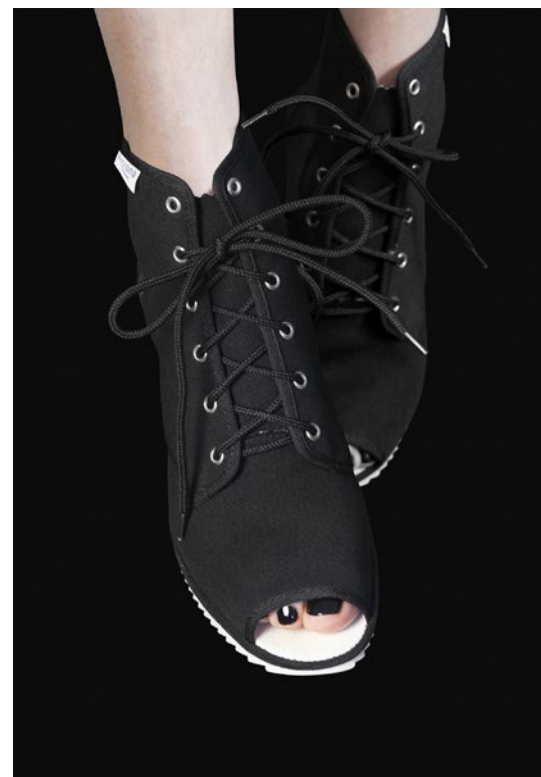
contemporary finance. The script, written by Jo Randerson, is itself a reflexive parable of labor precarity: The actor clownishly mimics the erratic fluctuations of the algorithm, even as he seems genuinely tormented by his job insecurity. "No one knows how long it's going to last," he says at one point. "It's an experiment." At a time when cultural and educational institutions are increasingly dependent on the returns of financial markets, *M&A* gives formal expression to those who are made to bear the attendant risks. The work also offers a sly critique of performance's institutionalization in museums (and its associated labor conditions) by underscoring its fiscal exigencies and dependencies.

# Irena Haiduk

*Nine Hour Delay*, 2012–58

*Nula Bill*, 2026

*Mon Mon Bag*, 2016–ongoing



*Nine Hour Delay*. Vertical ad, 2013

Irena Haiduk presents two projects under Yugoexport, an "oral corporation" modeled after the self-managed, autonomous organizations of the former Yugoslavia.

*Nine Hour Delay* (2012–58) revives the Borosana, an ergonomic pump designed in 1960s Yugoslavia for nine hours of comfortable standing on factory production lines; its form shaped by the conditions of women's labor. Production at the Borovo shoe company, which produced the shoe, ceased in 1991, but was revived by Yugoexport. At MIT, several hundred pairs of Borosana pumps are available for free, on the condition (established contractually)

that they are worn only while working. The contract ensures what Yugoexport proposes: that terms of labor be made explicit, reciprocal, and worn on the body.

An artist-designed currency, *Nula Bill* (2026), references the hyperinflation that accompanied Yugoslavia's collapse in the 1990s. As a teenager, Haiduk witnessed her mother's colleague at the National Bank illustrate new bills, adding zeroes in a continuous stream. Each denomination became obsolete almost as soon as the ink dried, returning the bills to their status as drawings. This note serves as a prop in Haiduk's debut feature *Nula* (2028). Haiduk's trillion-dinar bills are wrapped in plastic and rubber bands, hidden in gallery walls and List Center office drawers, and tucked in a *Mon Mon Bag* (2016–ongoing) produced by Yugoexport. This mode of

safekeeping, conceived in collaboration with Cally Spooner, honors a gesture from Spooner's Italian grandmother, Maria Wojtanowski (née Crucitti), who wrapped and hid her valuables. Those who wish to acquire a *Mon Mon Bag* may do so, while supplies last, on the condition that the bag be worn (with wrapped currency inside) for the duration of the exhibition. As with the shoes, to receive is to enter into a contract, and those who carry the bills become participants in a different aesthetic economy, one that redirects attention away from display and toward use, beyond acquisition and toward relation.

# Sidseleine Meineche Hansen

*Baby Mould, 2023*



*Baby Mould, 2023*

*Baby Mould* (2023) is a lead crystal sculpture cast from a mold used by the Little Sisters of Jesus in their serial fabrication of devotional Christ figurines. The Little Sisters are a religious community in the UK whose members take a vow of total poverty, working factory jobs and performing manual labor as an act of solidarity with working-class communities. Sidseleine Meineche Hansen's choice of material—lead crystal, a signifier of luxury display—transforms this humble reproductive tool into something precious, exclusive, and collectible. Its title is a play on “mother mold”—the support shell that holds another mold in shape, the structure beneath the structure. The baby mold is what sits inside that: neither the “mother” nor the cast object, but the middle layer, held and holding at once. *In vitro*, referring to procedures occurring outside the body, also translates to “in glass”—a semantic fold that pulls the work's material into the territory of assisted reproductive technology.

The figurines made by this mold share a strange kinship with works of art. Beyond their mutual status as objects of adoration, both are consecrated by an aura of autonomy—the appearance of existing on their own terms, independent of the labor that produced them. For the artwork, this is the myth of the solitary, inspired creator; for the Christ figurine, it is the theology of immaculate conception layered onto the labor of nuns within an institution that owns both the means of production and the doctrine that renders their work indistinguishable from worship. The artist's situation is not so different: Their work is presumed to be a calling arising from devotion, not a livelihood devised of necessity. Hansen's mold cast as fine art is, among other things, a provocation—addressed to a cult(ure) of believers in art's special status, for whom the pleasure of “doing what you love” is compensation enough.

# Chauncey Hare

Select exhibition copies of photographs, 1968–81



*Self-Portrait at EPA, 1980.* This photograph was made by Chauncey Hare to protest and warn against the growing domination of working people by multinational corporations and their elite owners and managers

Chauncey Hare (1934–2019) started taking photographs to alleviate the sickness he associated with his day job as an engineer at Standard Oil. While he initially shot landscapes, a chance encounter in 1968 with Orville England, a man who had been disabled at his low-level position at Standard, inspired him to photograph interiors as documents of alienation under American capitalism. These images procured Hare remarkable success, including multiple Guggenheim fellowships, an Aperture monograph, and a solo exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art. While his artful compositions aligned him with the style of acclaimed contemporaries like Diane Arbus and Garry Winogrand, he identified more with the social mission of Depression-era FSA photography. Hare was persistently vexed—and eventually driven from the field—by the antinomies of documentary photography's postwar institutionalization.

As his career progressed, Hare gradually realized the art world was just as hierarchical and reified as the corporation he had left: “I couldn't tell the difference

between the offices and hallway at MoMA from the offices and hallway at Chevron,” he recounted. He particularly objected to museums' formalist, depoliticized readings of his work. “The denial of picture content in favor of intellectualized “form” is now widely practiced as a way to neutralize material embarrassing to corporate patrons,” reads a flier Hare distributed as he picketed a 1979 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art exhibition that included his work.

He eventually cut ties with the art world and stopped photographing altogether. He worked instead as a home health aide for England, at the Environmental Protection Agency, and, finally, as a therapist specializing in “work abuse.” Wary of his work's instrumentalization as “art,” Hare considered destroying his archive but ultimately donated it to the Bancroft Library. To protect his intended message of protest, he stipulated that no original prints could ever leave the premises and that any reproductions must be accompanied by the line of text printed below the image on this page.

# Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill

*Spread*, 2021

*X-tend*, 2021



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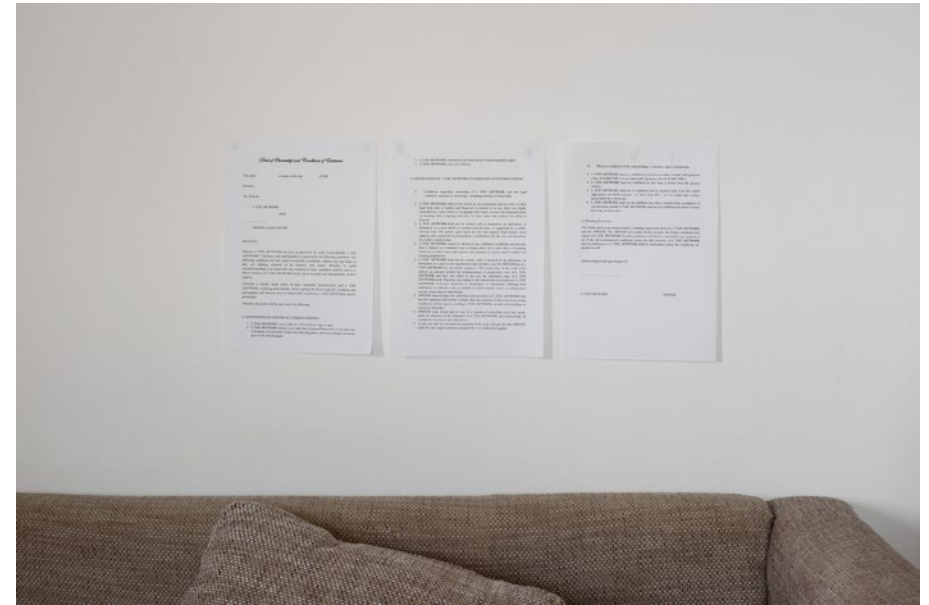
*Spread*, 2021

Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill uses ephemeral materials to resist settled, calcified ways of apprehending the world. These two sculptures take the shape of rabbits stuffed with tobacco and adorned with found materials, including fur and dried flowers. Hill became interested in rabbits after making the film *Coney Island Baby* (2018) with other artists involved in BUSH Gallery. For Hill, abiding jokes about rabbits' reproductive profligacy evinced how their (literal) labor is denigrated and came to symbolize how colonial capitalism maligns feminized and Indigenous labor while depending on it. As she explains, "I became interested, instead, in holding up the rabbit and celebrating the way they multiply, giving outward rather than accumulating." For the artist, who is Cree and Métis from Treaty 6 territory, the generosity of that giving is linked to Indigenous economic practices.

Tobacco was a plantation cash crop and an early form of currency in the colonial Americas; European settlers used it to pay wages, taxes, and dowries. But in addition to its role within land dispossession and enslavement, tobacco has also long been an important material within Indigenous kinship economies across the continent. Hill's sculptures, then, hold incommensurate forms of value within a single form. This layering of meaning recalls how alternative economies—often sustained by women—persist within and beneath regimes of capital accumulation, wage labor, and private property. "Despite the fact that colonial governments have used very extreme measures to impose capitalism onto Indigenous people, our economy has survived, and it poses a living alternative to capitalism," Hill has said.

# Yazan Khalili

*I, The Artwork*, 2016



*I, The Artwork*, 2016

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Yazan Khalili's *I, The Artwork* (2016) is a conceptual photograph depicting a contract pinned to the wall above a sofa. The unsigned contract, written from the perspective of the artwork itself, enunciates a series of conditions for its own ownership and exhibition. Some of these demands are eminently practical—stipulating the artwork's size and framing, for instance—while others are more quixotic and pointedly political. "I, THE ARTWORK, cannot be shown in any exhibition worldwide that is funded or co-funded, even in minor parts, by a state that is occupying territories of other states and nations, and attempts to remove and/or replace the existing populations," one line reads. Paradoxically, it is the owner and exhibitor of the artwork who decides how to interpret the demands and whether to take them seriously.

Khalili's work, more broadly, has examined donor economies and cultural infrastructure in and out of Palestine, as well as the role of images in mediating politics. *I, The Artwork* was made during a time of heightened attention to museums' complicity in various forms of exploitation and violence, often leading artists to the strategy of boycott: Examples include GULF Labor's boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). While these campaigns have depended on artists' (often tenuous) right to control the circulation of their own work, *I, The Artwork* asks if an artwork itself is able to enforce a boycott. It stages a fantasy of art's autonomy while acknowledging the likelihood of its provisos being violated. Its unsigned contract remains a perpetually unfulfilled demand, generating friction wherever it is owned and exhibited.

# Autumn Knight

*M \_ \_ \_ ER*, 2018–ongoing

*IM SORRY MOM*, 2026



*M \_ \_ \_ ER*, 2018–ongoing. Performance: MCA Chicago, 2022. Photo: Jeremy Lawson

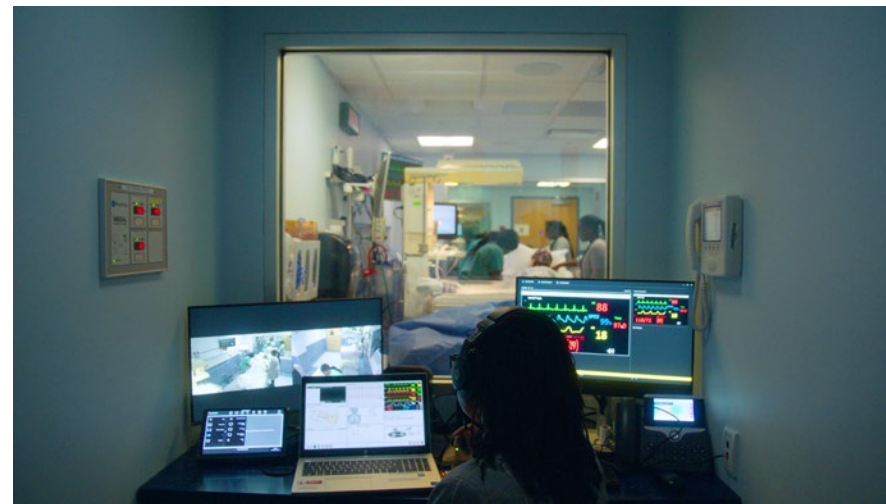
A soft sculpture occupies the gallery window in the form of a plush, oversized party banner. Each letter of “IM SORRY MOM” is pillowlike, sewn from a flesh-toned, pantyhose-like material. The bigness of the apology is evident, though what it would take to be sufficient remains (as with many debts of this kind) unstated. The softness here is rhetorical, persuasive in its own way—the material disarms and invites proximity, with each letter evoking a body that nurtures, cares, and absorbs as it is asked to keep giving. The sculpture emerged from Autumn Knight’s *M \_ \_ \_ ER* a performance realized at the List Center on April 11, 2026. The performance is built around and premised on a hypothetical scenario, and its title holds space for

several words at once (“mother,” “murder,” “matter”).

Knight has spoken of her interest in the “generative potential of disappointment,” and *M \_ \_ \_ ER* draws that potential into the registers of both maternal and racialized debt: immeasurable labor, and care, extended across generations. The oversized apology in the gallery also speaks to labor: Someone stitched each letter by hand, an act of care that mirrors the structure of the debt they name. In the fiction of Knight’s performance, the potential of apology, disappointment, and repair is in the room. The words hang in the gallery window, patient, waiting, inviting each reader to utter them—although not for the first time, and not only to this mother.

# Carolyn Lazard

*Fiction Contract*, 2025



*Fiction Contract*, 2025 (still)

Carolyn Lazard’s work examines care and violence as jointly instituted responses to need. “Instead of trying to make art about sick people, I’m trying to make art that is sick in all of its material and formal qualities,” they have said. Their film *Fiction Contract* (2025) documents a medical simulation at a public hospital in Queens, featuring a Black birthing mannequin named Jada. The simulation—a routine part of many medical professionals’ schedules—is both a performance of labor and *is* labor. The film’s title refers to the agreement among participants to behave as if the simulation is real.

The precisely shot film moves between a simulated patient room and an observation chamber behind a two-way mirror, where a medical professional voices the mannequin

and controls it mechanically. Lazard refers to this bipartite architecture as a “readymade film set.” Jada—manufactured as part of a 2020-era municipal initiative to reduce racial disparities in maternal mortality—can likewise be thought of as a readymade. She is an abjectly dependent figure, endlessly instrumentalized and animated by others. They are dependent on her, in turn, as the nexus of their performance and for increased efficiency in the health care industry. Jada’s ongoing rehearsal of birth points to the stubbornness of Black reproduction despite efforts to discipline, control, and surveil it, dating back to plantation slavery. Much of the film’s pathos is derived from the tender strangeness of this performing object.

# Ghislaine Leung

*Monitors, 2022*

*Budgets, 2025*

*Maintenance, 2025*



a hindrance—my financial ability, my need for stable employment, my commitment as a mother, my body, my political efficacy. But those limits, those dependencies could be turned around to become a resource for making artwork.” Some of her scores are informed by her own constraints (her studio time as a mother, for example), while others index those of institutional contexts. In *Budgets* (score: The exhibition budget is displayed), for instance, the exhibition budget is printed on the wall, disclosing the project’s material circumstances—or at least one version of them.

*Monitors, 2022*

Ghislaine Leung’s work reframes ongoing, everyday processes of maintenance, circulation, and reproduction. Her works assume the form of pithy, “context-contingent” scores, with their interpretation almost entirely delegated to the exhibiting institution. Different every time they’re performed, Leung’s scores register the myriad dependencies that condition art-making (and exhibition-making) as subject and material. Eschewing control and completeness, they are utterly vulnerable to their context and to others. While the use of scores borrows from performance, their model of distribution stems from Leung’s experience working in artists’ film and video distribution: Her works are infinitely reproducible but circulate as numbered editions.

“I have a fantasy or speculation that I should be unlimited,” Leung has explained. “Within that fantasy, limits are perceived as

In *Maintenance* (score: The exhibition space is left as it is), Leung reveals the reproductive labor of white-cube spaces by prescribing its withdrawal. The interpretation of this score is visible in traces from the previous exhibitions that would normally have been repaired or removed. Here, it’s the residue of paint on the floor, unpatched holes in the walls, and the unswept shavings of scraped vinyl text, plus any dust and dirt, which accumulate during the show. *Monitors* (2022) is another live work, “a baby monitor installed in one room and broadcast to another.” In *Performing Conditions*, it broadcasts a feed of the Bakalar Gallery—the List Center’s smallest space, housing the exhibition’s film program and an archival display of artists’ and students’ struggles—into the main galleries. As a curatorial gesture, this alludes to the vulnerability of this auxiliary material while foregrounding its labor of support.

# Reba Maybury

*The Two Friends, 2025*

*Number, 42, British, IT Service Management, The Midlands, UK, 2025*

*Yet to be Named 4, 22, British philosophy student/socialist and in chastity. North East England, 2025*

*Francis Bacon, 29, German Junior Art Advisor, London, 2026*



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Les deux amies*, 1895

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was one of many fin-de-siècle artists who made Parisian brothels subjects of modern art—in *Les deux amies* (1895), two sex workers lounge in a scene in which work and rest are difficult to distinguish. His title, which translates as “two friends,” foregrounds what their occupation does not define. While some may read their intimacy as a performance of eroticism, the artist Reba Maybury prefers to interpret it as two bored coworkers socializing on the job. For *Performing Conditions*, Maybury, an artist and dominatrix, commissioned three paint-by-numbers reproductions of this work, each executed by one of her submissive men. This formal choice is partly pragmatic: Because the image is already determined, it eliminates creative agency

entirely. With nothing to interpret or decide, it ensures that the works belong unambiguously to Maybury. Her submissives contribute labor, time, and compliance, and are credited only on the artist’s terms (in the titles, which identify them by alias, age, occupation, and location).

As her clients, they are receiving a service even as they are seemingly providing one. Maybury could

take their money but prefers their labor, which she leverages within her artistic career. The arrangement is, according to her, “amoral”: not a violation of ethics but an indifference to them—maybe even the same indifference with which any system extracts labor for gain. The subject of Maybury’s source image—women whose work and pleasure appear inseparable—is reproduced by men, and by Maybury, in a dynamic structured by exactly that confusion, while the seriality of these paintings detracts from the supposed singularity of Toulouse-Lautrec’s genius. In mapping BDSM’s voluntary submission onto paint-by-numbers’ prescribed labor, Maybury’s works reveal how sex work, kink, and artistic making all traffic in similarly fraught economies.

# Senga Nengudi

*R.S.V.P. Reverie—"B" Suite, 1977/2011*

*Studio Performance with R.S.V.P., 1976*



*Studio Performance with R.S.V.P., 1976.* Documentation photo credit: Ken Peterson

Senga Nengudi's works draw out the poetic properties of humble materials: In this case, nylon mesh and sand. She studied dance alongside visual art, and works in her *R.S.V.P.* series (1975–ongoing) have frequently been activated by performers, both in her studio and in exhibition spaces. During these activations, dancers entwine with the sculptures in a tensile choreography of elasticity and restraint, holding and being held. The series' title is a reference to this relational quality.

While abstract in nature, the sculptures' distended masses and porous surfaces

recall the vulnerability of a body under pressure. "The body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape," Nengudi wrote in a 1977 statement on the series. "After giving birth to my own son, I thought of Black wet-nurses suckling child after child—their own as well as those of others—until their breasts rested on their knees, their energies drained." The sculptures formally enact Black women's gestational labor, coerced and freely given, in the afterlife of the plantation—the foundational site of modernity described by Saidiya Hartman as "the belly of the world."

# Adrian Piper

*Some Reflective Surfaces, 1975–76*



*Some Reflective Surfaces, 1975–76* (still)

In *Some Reflective Surfaces* (1975–76), Adrian Piper examines the fraught power and pleasure of being what she calls a "performing object." The multimedia installation is based on an early live performance of the same name, Piper's first in an art setting. In its first half, Piper appears as a "streamlined update" of her Mythic Being alter ego and narrates a story about her former job as a discotheque dancer. She describes how she and the club's two other dancers started coordinating their appearance and movement, transforming their previously competitive relationship into something more intimate. "It was like we were all versions of one person, and instead of looking for our reflections individually in the mirror, we'd look at each other, and we'd see these reflections in each other," she recounts.

During its second half, Piper dances to Aretha Franklin's "Respect," drawing movements from an earlier street performance, *Aretha Franklin Catalysis* (1971–72). In the installation's video, Piper is

shown dancing alongside fellow philosophy graduate students at Harvard University; during the live performance, this video was projected onto the wall behind the artist. At the performance's conclusion, Piper speaks to her audience directly: "Of course I know you're out there. [ . . . ] You know very well that I'm doing this solely for your benefit; it's all for you."

The layered performances of *Some Reflective Surfaces*—across the club and the museum, Piper's job and her work—suggest that no matter the setting, all performance is formed by a willful loss of control and an asymmetry of power "between audience and performer, viewer and object viewed." Rather than disavow this condition of dependency, Piper finds agency and collectivity in the position of the performing object. As she wrote in a 1975 statement on the piece, "Voluntary self-objectification, of the kind that occurs in dancing, in performance of any kind, in modeling, or in permitting oneself to be looked at or done to sexually, can be an act of political defiance."

# Joshua Schwebel

*The Employee*, 2018–25



*The Employee*, 2018–25. Still from performance documentation, January 26, 2021, 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (UTC-5)

20

For *The Employee* (2018–25), Joshua Schwebel used funding from a Canada Council for the Arts grant to hire a part-time grant writer for Forest City Gallery (FCG) in London, Ontario. While the gallery is one of Canada's oldest artist-run centers—and, notably, an early hub for organizing around artist compensation there—it has long been sustained by the work of a single, underpaid, part-time employee. Schwebel's gesture critiqued labor precarity and inadequate public provision for the arts, while aiming to practically mitigate these conditions. The support went both ways, as Schwebel wrote in his grant application: "My artwork will produce the infrastructure necessary to reinforce the currently inadequate infrastructure at the gallery, while the gallery produces the infrastructure necessary to understand my gesture as an artwork."

From September 2020 to October 2021, Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott performed

the role of the employee, which was both a part-time job and a durational delegated performance. During the seven years of its unfolding—from FCG's initial invitation to Schwebel in 2018 to the publication of the project's book and email archive in 2025—*The Employee* was beset by numerous difficulties and delays, including the COVID pandemic, an unsuccessful hire, chronic burnout among many contributors, and its ultimate failure to procure any additional funding for FCG. By meticulously indexing these conditions, however, *The Employee* serves as a poly-vocal testament to artistic labor's ambivalent mixture of tedium, conviviality, exhaustion, and love. At the List Center, the project is represented by a selection of emails from its archive, a recording of a live-streamed video performance of the work, and Schwebel and Valcourt-Synnott's contracts, prepared with the assistance of the artist's father, a retired lawyer.

# Dread Scott

*Slave Rebellion Reenactment*, 2019



*Slave Rebellion Reenactment Performance Still 4*, 2020

For *Slave Rebellion Reenactment* (2019), Dread Scott assembled hundreds of Black and Indigenous people to restage the 1811 German Coast Uprising, the largest organized uprising of enslaved people in US history. In his documentation, Scott makes no attempt to conceal anachronistic elements—such as parked cars and the oil refineries of Louisiana's Cancer Alley—that underscore the continuity of racial capitalism from the nineteenth century to the present. While the historical uprising ended in the revolutionaries' capture and execution, Scott's performance concluded with a celebratory rally of music and chanting at New Orleans's Congo Square, which, for centuries, has been an important site for the practice of African culture in the Americas.

While the performance is captured modestly in six photographic stills, untold

amounts of collective labor went into its making: from word-of-mouth recruitment via clandestine cells and costume-sewing circles to the care labor that provisioned its two-day, twenty-six-mile span. In the context of this exhibition, *Slave Rebellion Reenactment* reframes our debts to the enslaved, asking what it means to be indebted to their practices of fugitivity and revolt. "The slave is constantly escaping being constantly undone," Fred Moten and Stefano Harney have written. "What might it be, then, to be in service, or to be indebted, to this constant escape, which for us takes the form of feel, or manifests itself as feel's constant generation of form in and out of the informal?" Just like an uprising, *Slave Rebellion Reenactment* is formed by the ongoing process of its making, belonging to no one and everyone.

21

# Xaviera Simmons

*The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause,*  
2020



*The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause,* 2020.  
Photo: Sara Morgan

22

Xaviera Simmons's text painting is supported by eighteen diagonal steel poles, part of the work's conceptual engagement with twentieth-century "sculptor heavyweights." Here, steel and scale are in the service of something those celebrated sculptors left unaddressed. The text's excessive bolstering is almost anxious, as if the framed words require more shoring up than their weight alone could justify. One must pause to read its densely rendered letters. The text is from Special Field Order No. 15, commonly known as "40 Acres and A Mule." This 1865 Union military order promised formerly enslaved people forty acres of land along the coastlines of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. What Simmons has made monumental is not a general on a horse but a document—a promise made, briefly honored, and then betrayed. Often omitted from its history is the fact that the idea originated with Black community leaders. Twenty ministers met with Union generals in Savannah and identified plainly what

formerly enslaved people desired and needed: land, self-governance, the ability to build and pass on wealth.

Simmons's work often engages language as labor, as a material to be worked, shaped, made to carry weight. Here, with each hand-painted letter, the artist physically reinscribed, stroke by stroke, the potential this document held. Special Field Order No. 15 was revoked within months, and 400,000 acres were

returned to former Confederate owners in the form of "reparations." Formerly enslaved people were driven into wage labor and debt peonage instead. Yet, land distribution and reparations were common federal policy in this time. Three years earlier, President Lincoln had signed the Morrill Act, which expropriated 10.7 million acres of Indigenous land to endow and fund a new system of universities, among them MIT. The same federal apparatus that was converting Indigenous land into institutional capital was simultaneously ensuring that formerly enslaved people would have none. What was built, for whom, and at whose expense? The ledger-like cadence of the work's title ("the structure, the labor, the foundation") invites a recitation of a few of many outstanding debts.

*The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause* (2020) will be on view from late May 2026 to Fall 2027. The work that is part of this exhibition is excerpted from a trio of sculptures of the same title.

# Cally Spooner

*Self Tracking,* 2018/2026



*Self Tracking,* 2018 (detail). Photo: Daniel Perez

23

Trained in philosophy, theater, and dance, Cally Spooner has made performance both her medium and her subject. While her earlier work involved live dance in museum settings, she stepped back from that format after realizing that it left her outside the embodied knowledge exchange of the dancers and produced what she was trying to critique: the performing body as image, reduced to documentation. Here, performance is a durational condition rather than an embodied event: It is the compulsory self-performance demanded by neoliberal metrics, absorbed into the body whether or not anyone is watching.

*Self Tracking* (2018/2026)—first created in 2016, which Spooner extended in 2018, and then again for this show—runs along

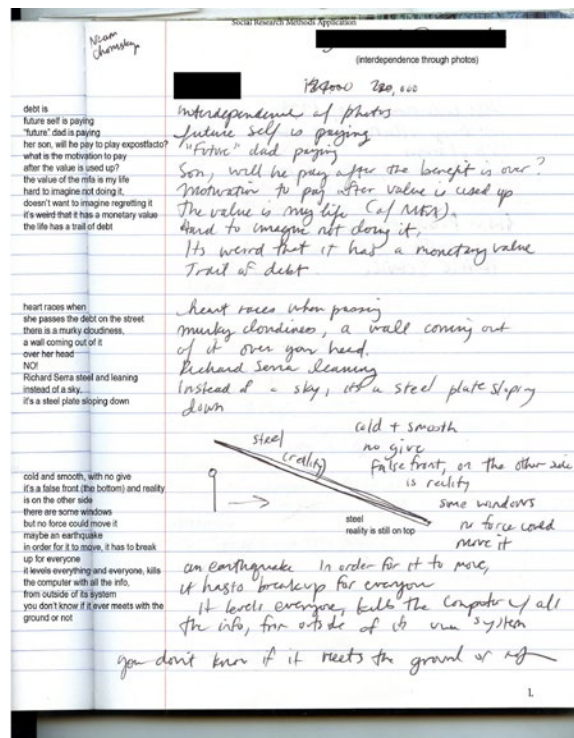
half the gallery's walls, charting ten years of data in pencil lines above and below a faint but unbroken median line of Sienna X express-tanning mist, applied at the artist's eye level. The three data sets are Spooner's thyroid TSH levels, her ranking on Artfacts.net (a subscription platform that quantifies artists' careers in order for collectors to speculate on value), and the value of the British Pound against the Euro. Graphed on the same wall, metabolism, market position, and monetary policy become equivalent measures of the artist's "performance." The tidemark of spray tan, a product designed to simulate the image of health (and post-vacation wealth), holds all three data sets together as a single corporeal baseline.

# Cassie Thornton

Selection of works on paper relating to student debt and

Richard Serra, 2011–12

*Education Delivers Students*, 2011



*Application to the London School of Economics*, 2012 (detail)

Cassie Thornton's early works attempt to find a form for the debt assumed by her and her fellow MFA students at the California College of the Arts. Through guided meditation sessions called "debt visualizations," Thornton asked classmates to imagine the physical form of their debts. She likened this process to finding and entering a hidden room, "a new part of the institution where we see and speak about the unspoken and invisible." After her peers repeatedly used language that evoked Richard Serra's monumental steel sculptures—heavy and imposing, precariously leaning—Thornton drew on the transcribed conversations to deliver a guerrilla tour of Serra's retrospective at

the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "Debt is material, and Richard Serra is a human filter, distilling economic disaster into solid dark matter," Thornton told attendees.

*Performing Conditions* features extensive documentation of these tours, including Thornton's script, photographs, correspondence, and hand-drawn maps. Also on view is *Education Delivers Students* (2011), a "translation" of Serra's polemical text-based video *Television Delivers People* (1973; with Carlota Fay Schoolman) made by swapping key words: "infinite debt," for instance, replaces "mass media." Finally, the exhibition documents Thornton's daring proposal that Serra create a new

work—or auction off an existing one—as a representation of the debt of her graduating class, and that the proceeds be used toward paying off that debt. Thornton arranged for an anonymous art handler to leave a letter with this proposal on Serra's kitchen table, but she never received a reply. These early works led to many years of experimentation with debts, under the aegis of the Feminist Economics Department (The FED), as well as Thornton's organizing with Strike Debt and other Occupy Wall Street–related efforts. Serra passed away in 2024, and the California College of the Arts will cease to exist next year. In all likelihood, the debt of Thornton's graduating class continues to accrue.

# Constantina Zavitsanos

*LEAVE – A – PENNY / TAKE – A – PENNY*, 2024

*There doesn't seem to be anyone around (Host)*, 2026  
(2020–25)



*I think we're alone now (Host)*, 2016 (2008–16). Photo: Jonathan Dorado

Constantina Zavitsanos calls attention to sites of debt and dependency that subtend and exceed the liberal economic paradigm of commensurate exchange. *LEAVE – A – PENNY / TAKE – A – PENNY* (2024), a modest-sized vessel located at the Visitor Services desk, casts the titular object in bronze, sanctifying it as a "wishing well" or "public pool" for giving and taking without accounting. Zavitsanos, who often works with textual scores as well as takeaways, describes the sculpture as an "object that holds its score at the level of its title and its material." The coins that visitors may encounter have multiple forms of value simultaneously, including their face value, the melt value of composite metals, the

numismatic value of rare or collectable coins, and the exchange value generated by their association with an artwork. The dish the coins sit in performs its own, everyday paradox: Even as it facilitates the squaring of transactions, its internal logic is the opposite of transaction. Some people only give; some only take; some do neither or both. "Debt" refers to this open-ended, communistic flux of ability and need.

*There doesn't seem to be anyone around (Host)* (2026) is a memory foam mattress topper

framed in wood and shaped by "five years sleep with many." Zavitsanos describes it as congealing a durational performance of shared rest, creation, and recreation. A bed can be a space of sickness, study, love, and work. The traces of these reproductive labors—tears, blood, sweat, cum—are indexed in its materiality, but its sagging shape is not the imprint of a body. In its lean against the wall, the viscoelastic material of memory foam invariably finds its own shape, even after being moved or touched. "To lean is to simultaneously find support and exert pressure. To lean is to depend," Zavitsanos has written in relation to the work.

# Artur Żmijewski

*Sculpture Plein-air. Świecie, 2009*



*Sculpture Plein-air. Świecie, 2009 (still)*

26

In the 1960s, the Polish People's Republic organized a series of collaborations around Poland in which artists worked with factory workers to produce public sculptures; among these were the Biennale of Spatial Forms at an engineering plant in Elbląg (1965) and the Symposium of Artists and Scientists at a nitrogen plant in Puławy (1966). As Ministry of Culture operations, they were organized to generate evidence for the state that a classless society was thriving and that no conflict existed between intellectuals and workers. But the artworks were conceived by artists and executed by others, reinscribing the very asymmetry that the communist ideology sought to deny.

*Sculpture Plein-Air. Świecie (2009)* returns to this history forty years later, at the Mekro steel fabrication plant in the postindustrial town of Świecie. Artur Żmijewski, whose work often stages social encounters

to expose the fault lines within them, filmed seven artists collaborating with steelworkers on monumental sculptures organized around the theme of "the worker." As the artists present stereotypical iconography (overalls, hard hat, a laboring body) with sincerity, the steelworkers react with visible amusement; one questions whether the category being invoked has anything to do with them. Others offer a sharper diagnosis: "The worker is respected only if the revolution is coming," says one. Another later describes the experience as being marked by "a large dose of irritation." Nonetheless, the group realized eight sculptures together, which were ceremonially unveiled throughout the town, faithfully reproducing the ritual form of the 1960s events. Whether what preceded it was genuine collaboration or a more familiar asymmetry, remains deliberately unresolved.

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

### Elizabeth Catlett

*I have given the world my songs, 1947*

From the series *The Black Woman*

Linocut on paper

9 7/8 × 7 in. (25.1 × 17.8 cm)

Art Museum at the University of Saint Joseph

### Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise

*The Judgement of the White Cube, 2023*

Single-channel video with sound, 9:00 min.

*White Cube Lusanga* by Ced'art Tamasala and Jean Kawata, 2023

Wood, CNC-milling

22 1/2 × 26 1/4 × 25 1/2 in. (57 × 67 × 65 cm)

Both works courtesy the artists and KOW, Berlin

### Ced'art Tamasala of CATPC

Untitled, 2018

Ink and graphite on paper

41 1/4 × 29 1/2 in. (105 × 75 cm) framed (approx.)

Ann and Marshall Webb Collection

### Blondell Cummings

*Chicken Soup, 1981*

Single-channel video with sound, 6:32 min.

Dance recorded for television as part of

*Commitment: Two Portraits* (1988, dir. Bernar Hébert)

*Basic Strategies IV, 1985*

Single-channel video with sound, 37:45 min.

Rehearsal footage, performed by Alvin Ailey

Repertory Ensemble

Blondell Cummings collection, Jerome Robbins

Dance Division, New York Public Library

Both works courtesy the Estate of Blondell

Cummings

### Jeneen Frei Njootli, Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, Chandra Melting Tallow, and Tania Willard

*Coney Island Baby, 2018*

Single-channel video with sound, 12:17 min.

Courtesy the artists

### Sophia Giovannitti

*Contract: Choreography 1, 2022*

Score

*Confession Prototype 1, 2025*

Performance documentation, accessible only with signed NDA

Single-channel video with sound, 43:31 min.

*Contract, 2026*

Performance by appointment only, May 5–10

All works courtesy the artist

### Goldin+Senneby

*M&A, 2013*

with Jo Randerson (playwright), Paul Leong (investment banker), Jacky Mallett (computer scientist), Anna Heymowska (set designer), Johan Hjerpe (graphic designer), and Jon Vellante (actor) Performance, props, algorithmic trading strategy, and bound book with watercolor, foil, sealing wax Dimensions variable

The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Committee on Media and Performance Art, 2016

### Irena Haiduk

*Nine Hour Delay, 2012–58*

Borosana ergonomic black lace-up labor shoe (canvas, rubber, cardboard, aluminum; sizes 36–42), Contract Form B-02, workers, time

Produced by Yugoexport

Courtesy Yugoexport

*Mon Mon Bag, 2016–ongoing*

Boxcalf leather bag with gold or silver hardware

9 1/2 × 6 7/10 × 3 1/10 in. (24 × 17 × 8 cm)

Designed after Aleksandar Joksimović's maxim prescribing that, in order to preserve good posture, a working woman should not carry more than two kilograms on her shoulders

*Nula Bill, 2026*

*Mon Mon Bag*, plastic wrap, rubber bands, paper currency, gestures of Maria Wojtanowski (née Crucitti)

Dimensions variable

Both works produced by Yugoexport and MIT List Visual Arts Center

Courtesy Yugoexport and Cally Spooner

### Sidseil Meineche Hansen

*Baby Mould, 2023*

Glass

3 1/4 × 7 × 12 3/4 in. (8.3 × 17.8 × 32.4 cm)

Courtesy the artist and Sylvia Kouvali, London and Piraeus

### Chauncey Hare

Exhibition copies of select photographs, 1968–81, and related ephemera

Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

27

**Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill**

*Spread*, 2021  
Pantyhose, tobacco, thread, charms, and rabbit fur  
12¼ × 9¼ × 10½ in. (31.1 × 23.5 × 26.6 cm)

*X-tend*, 2021  
Pantyhose, tobacco, thread, dried flowers, and rabbit fur  
12½ × 10¾ × 13½ in. (31.8 × 27.6 × 34.3 cm)  
Both works Gochman Family Collection

**Yazan Khalili**

*I, The Artwork*, 2016  
Photograph  
31⅞ × 47¼ in. (79.2 × 120 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai

**Autumn Knight**

*M\_\_\_ER*, 2018–ongoing  
Live performance: Saturday, April 11, 2026  
*IM SORRY MOM*, 2026  
Mixed media  
Dimensions variable  
Both works courtesy the artist

**Carolyn Lazard**

*Fiction Contract*, 2025  
Single-channel video with sound and open captions, 9:11 min.  
Courtesy the artist and Trautwein Herleth, Berlin

**Ghislaine Leung**

*Monitors*, 2022  
Score: A baby monitor installed in one room and broadcast to another  
*Budgets*, 2025  
Score: The exhibition budget is displayed  
*Maintenance*, 2025  
Score: The exhibition space is left as it is  
All works courtesy the artist and Maxwell Graham, New York

**Reba Maybury**

*The Two Friends*, 2025  
*Number, 42, British, IT Service Management, The Midlands, UK*, 2025  
Forty-eight paints on printed canvas  
23⅞ × 31½ in. (60 × 80 cm)  
*Yet to be Named 4, 22, British philosophy student/ socialist and in chastity. North East England*, 2025  
Thirty-six paints on printed canvas  
23⅞ × 31½ in. (60 × 80 cm)  
*Francis Bacon, 29, German Junior Art Advisor, London*, 2026  
Twenty-four paints on printed canvas  
23⅞ × 31½ in. (60 × 80 cm)  
All works courtesy the artist and Company Gallery, New York

**Senga Nengudi**

*Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976  
Gelatin silver print  
29⅞ × 40⅞ in. (75.9 × 103.2 cm)  
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Rose Art Museum Acquisition Fund, Gift of Monroe and Edith Geller, 2019.17  
Documentation photo credit: Ken Peterson  
*R.S.V.P. Reverie—"B" Suite*, 1977/2011  
Nylon mesh, sand, and pole  
60 × 48 × 18 in. (152.4 × 121.9 × 45.7 cm)  
Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. Jeanne L. Wasserman Fund and General Acquisition Fund

**Adrian Piper**

*Some Reflective Surfaces*, 1975–76  
Installation in three parts: Single-channel video with soundtrack, two silver gelatin prints, audio soundtrack  
*Some Reflective Surfaces*, 1975–76  
Performance documentation  
Video, 15:27 min.  
*Some Reflective Surfaces*, 1975–76  
Documentation of the performance  
Two gelatin silver prints  
19¼ × 15 in. (49 × 38 cm); 15 × 19¼ in. (38 × 49 cm)  
Performance soundtrack (audio), 15:27 min.  
Documentation photo credit: Warren Silverman  
Collection of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation. © Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation

**Joshua Schwebel**

*The Employee*, 2018–25  
Documentation of delegated performance (contracts, video, emails) with Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott  
Courtesy the artist

**Dread Scott**

*Slave Rebellion Reenactment Performance Still 1–6*, 2020  
Pigment prints  
Each 20 × 30 in. (50.8 × 76.2 cm)  
All works courtesy the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery

**Xavier Simmons**

*The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause*, 2020  
Steel, wood, concrete, and acrylic  
One of three parts: 150 × 108 × 312 in. (3.8 × 2.7 × 8 m)  
Courtesy the artist and David Castillo Gallery

**Cally Spooner**

*Self Tracking*, 2018/2026  
Sienna X express-tanning mist streak-free natural color, pencil, colored pencil, data from the artist's metabolism (2013–25), data from Artfacts.net on the artist's career rank (2013–25), data from XE The World's Trusted Currency Authority on the British Pound measured against the Euro (2013–25)  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist, gb agency, Paris, and ZERO..., Milan

**Cassie Thornton**

Selection of early works on paper relating to student debt and Richard Serra, 2011–12  
*Education Delivers Students*, 2011  
Single-channel video with sound, 6:44 min.  
All works courtesy the artist

**Constantina Zavitsanos**

*LEAVE – A – PENNY / TAKE – A – PENNY*, 2024  
Bronze; open to participation by the work's title  
4½ × 4¼ × 1½ in. (11.4 × 10.8 × 3.8 cm)  
*There doesn't seem to be anyone around (Host)*, 2026 (2020–25)  
Queen mattress topper, wood, five years sleep with many  
71¾ × 52½ × 6 in. (182 × 133 × 15 cm)  
Both works courtesy the artist and Galerie Max Mayer

**Artur Żmijewski**

*Sculpture Plein-air. Świecie*, 2009  
Single-channel video with sound, 22:30 min.  
Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

## IMAGES AT WORK

*Images at Work* is a film and video program conceived as an offshoot of and appendix to *Performing Conditions*—dependent on the whole, even as it supports it. Comprising nonfiction and experimental works made over the last half-century, the program sketches an unruly history of labor and its refusal. It also contends with recurrent debates around the image's use-value—particularly the social documentary and militant cinema traditions that haunt the representation of labor. Across these works, “the worker” and the “working class” are not unified or historically stable entities. Instead, they flicker in and out of view, evincing their contested and elusive nature.

Each thematic program screens for three weeks in the Bakalar Gallery. “Strike and Sabotage” proposes a shared grammar and common ground for labor struggle and anticolonial struggle. “With and Against Housework” presents visions of domestic work from diversely located feminist filmmakers in the 1970s and eighties. “Solidarity and Form” gathers oblique, abstract approaches to the representationally overdetermined subject of the worker. Finally, “Non/performance for the Camera” examines the figure of the cultural worker and their possibilities of refusal.

The moving-image program is organized by Ramona Ngin.



### Strike and Sabotage, April 11–May 3

Alanis Obomsawin, *Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man*, 1997. 58 min.

Razan AlSalah, *A Stone's Throw*, 2024. 40 min.



### With and Against Housework, May 12–31

Margaret Raspé, *Der Sadist schlägt das eindeutig Unschuldige (The Sadist Whips the Unquestionably Innocent)*, 1971. 6 min.

Leticia Parente, *Tarefa I (Assignment I)*, 1982. 2 min.

Fronza Woods, *Fannie's Film*, 1981. 15 min.

Yugantar Film Collective, *Molkarin (Maid Servant)*, 1981. 25 min.



### Solidarity and Form, June 2–21

Joyce Wieland, *Solidarity*, 1973. 11 min.

Karimah Ashadu, *Lagos Sand Merchants*, 2013. 10 min.

Kevin Jerome Everson, *Sound That*, 2014. 12 min.

Morgan Quaintance, *Repetitions*, 2022. 24 min.



### Non/performance for the Camera, June 23–July 12

Brigitta Kuster, Isabell Lorey, Marion von Osten, and Katja Reichard, *Camera Running! A Small Postfordist Drama*, 2004. 32 min.

Amol K. Patil, *Black Masks on Roller Skates*, 2022. 10 min.

Mike Henderson, *Dufus (aka Art)*, 1970/73. 6 min.

Mako Idemitsu, *Kiyoko's Situation*, 1989. 24 min.

## THREE STRIKES, 1969

Presented in the Bakalar Gallery alongside the film and video program, this selection of archival material narrates three episodes of refusal at and around MIT in 1969. The first is the inauguration of the Art Workers' Coalition, sparked by Takis's withdrawal of his work from an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (the artist was then a fellow at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies [CAVS]). The second is the March 4 “Scientists Strike for Peace,” a student/faculty protest of the Vietnam War and the Institute's contributions to weapons research. The third is the international boycott of that year's São Paulo Biennial in response to Brazil's deepening military dictatorship, resulting in the cancellation of the CAVS-organized American delegation. The documents are presented in informal reproduction on bulletin boards as an homage to Andrea Fraser and Helmut Draxler's *Services* (1994), a series of meetings and a “working-group exhibition” that, among other things, examined histories of cultural organizing and their relevance to a new generation of practitioners.

In their own way, each of the protagonists of these movements sought to blur the boundaries between previously distinct and calcified roles: student, scientist, artist, and worker. These redefinitions enabled novel routes of action and strategic alliances but also produced friction and dissensus. In contrast to *Performing Conditions'* emphasis on the politics of aesthetic forms, this material examines the work of study and struggle that happens before, beneath, and around form: what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten call “deformational, subformational, formless formation.” Intended as neither a romanticization of the past nor a lament for its failures, these painfully unresolved histories are offered here as resources for the unfinished struggles of the present.



*Non a la Biennale de São Paulo Dossier* (cover), 1969. Center for Advanced Visual Studies records, MIT Libraries

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## ABOUT THE LIST CENTER

Founded in 1985, the List Visual Arts Center is a creative laboratory that provides artists with a space to freely experiment and push existing boundaries.

As the contemporary art museum at MIT, the List Center has three gallery spaces where curators present a dynamic program of six to nine contemporary exhibitions annually. The galleries and all programs are free and open to the public.

Beyond exhibitions and programs, the List Center also maintains MIT's permanent art collection which includes the Institute's Campus Lending Collection, the Student Lending Collection, and the Public Art Collection, which serves as the Boston area's only free outdoor sculpture park.

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## MEMBERSHIP

The entirety of the List Center's artistic program is supported by our Members. Join today to be the first to learn about our exhibitions, collections, and behind-the-scenes experiences while connecting with artists, curators, collectors, and fellow arts enthusiasts. To learn more, please visit: [listart.mit.edu/support](http://listart.mit.edu/support)

## ACCESSIBILITY

The List Visual Arts Center strives to provide an accessible experience for all our visitors. For questions about program access, please email: [listaccessibility@mit.edu](mailto:listaccessibility@mit.edu)

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## SPONSORS

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## RELATED PERFORMANCES & PROGRAMS

### Opening Reception

April 10, 2026, 7–9 PM

### *Nine Hour Delay (2012–58)*

April 10, 2026 7:30 PM

Borosana Shoe Issue

Public program

### Live Performance:

Goldin+Senneby, *M&A*

April 10, 2026, until funds expire,  
gallery hours

### Live Performance:

Autumn Knight, *M\_\_\_\_\_ER*

April 11, 3 PM

Public program

### Curator Tour:

Ramona Ngjin

April 17, 2026, 12:15–1:00 PM

Public program

### Member Tour:

Behind-the-Scenes with  
List Curators

April 29, 2026, 5:30–7:30 PM

Member program

### Graduate Student Talk:

Paul Dai

April 30, 2026, 5:30–6:00 PM

Public program

### Live Performance:

Sophia Giovannitti, *Contract*

By appointment only

May 5–10, 2026, gallery hours

Giovannitti occupies the Bakalar Gallery for six days, working on her forthcoming book, and opening the space, at a price, to those wishing to enter a live choreography with her: “The artist’s private sphere, de facto a site of extraction, becomes a site of negotiation. Debts are incurred and traded. Nothing is forgiven.”

For more information visit: [choreography.info](http://choreography.info)

### Graduate Student Talk:

Léa Miranda

May 7, 2026, 5:30–6:00 PM

Public program

### Curator Tour:

Natalie Bell

July 17, 2026, 12:15–1:00 PM

Public program

All List Visual Arts Center programs are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. Registration is required. For more information about events and programs related to this exhibition, please visit:

[listart.mit.edu/events-programs](http://listart.mit.edu/events-programs)

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our exhibitions at  
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