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Jasmeen Patheja, *Indri Pickle Lab*, 2016, Video, 8 min. Courtesy the artist.

### *Once More, with Feeling*

November 11 – December 22, 2016

**Opening reception:** Friday November 11, 6 – 8 PM

**Curated by:** Chelsea Haines

**Artists:** Rasha Asfour, Chloë Bass, Shadi Harouni, Katya Grokhovsky, Jana Kapelová, Allison Kaufman, Hilla Toony Navok, Jasmeen Patheja, Megan Snowe

*Once More, with Feeling* investigates the gendered economy of emotional expression and its relationship to contemporary art. Exploring the gaps between fantasy and reality, labor and leisure, free and working time, the artists in this exhibition—based in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East—grapple with how changing definitions of work have informed their own processes as artists, workers, and women.

The exhibition is home to the *Emotional Labor Union*, a new commission by **Megan Snowe**. A project in three parts—sculptural installation, take-away publication, and performance series—it operates on the assumption that the *Emotional Labor Union* is an existing and active body advocating for its collective wellbeing. The printed book functions as a union handbook, and includes texts interrupted by liquid, scent, and various sense-stimulating substances that create a visceral reading experience as well as an increased awareness of the materiality of text. Programs include a union town-hall meeting on **Wednesday, November 16**, with invited professionals and members of the public, as well as the performance *The Emotional Labor Movement*, on **Wednesday, December 7**, developed in collaboration with movement therapist **Kendra Kambestad**.

The projects by **Rasha Asfour** and **Katya Grokhovsky** transform deeply personal daily practices into artistic process. Asfour's photographs meticulously document the artist's ongoing weight-loss struggles. A stark series of self-portraits of the former competitive swimmer in the same black-and-pink bathing suit, taken every day over the course of a year, form an archive of the artist's efforts to shape her body and come to terms with her self-image.

Katya Grokhovsky explores non-verbal communication, emotional translation, and the migrant female body by taking her personal experiences moving from the former Soviet Union to Australia in the 1990s as a starting point to explore the smile. A series of acrylic and collage works on paper of contorted and distorted smiles emphasizes the cultural specificity—and the hard work—that goes into this seemingly natural expression. Grokhovsky's lecture-performance *Polite, Pleasant, Endearing*, with dancer **Jeremy D. Olson**, on **Friday, November 18**, delves into the history and social functions of the smile.

Other projects raise awareness of daily routines by spending time with others. In **Chloë Bass's** *The Book of Everyday Instruction, Chapter One: you + me together* (2015), Bass invited Cleveland residents she did not know to spend time with her sharing an activity that they would typically engage in with a friend or partner. The series of text and photo-diptychs and ephemera document these shared activities from dog walking to going to the movies to co-teaching a class.

Similarly, **Jana Kapelová's** *Free Working Time* (2011–present) accumulates different creative practices that workers in different cities across the world have developed on the job (unknowingly to their supervisors). From a business manager who writes poetry to an aircraft mechanic who paints Easter eggs, Kapelová documents these hobbies pursued during working hours as small resistances that begin to break down the binary of labor and leisure time.

Role-playing in the space between free and working time is at the center of the fantasy worlds portrayed by **Jasmeen Patheja** and **Allison Kaufman**. Patheja's *Indri Pickle Lab* is a collaboration between the artist and her grandmother, Inderjit (Indri) Kaur. Indri forays into the realms of politics, science, and entertainment in a series of photo and video performances based on characters of Indri's choosing. In the video *Mango Pickle* (2016), Indri plays both scientist and cook as she instructs viewers on how to make the South Asian delicacy.

Allison Kaufman explores male fantasies in videos such as *Dancing with Divorced Men* (2008), a loop of recordings of the artist dancing with middle-aged, divorced men in their homes. After asking the men to choose a song and style of dance, Kaufman created a female counterpart based on their cues. In *Friday Nights at Guitar Center* (2012), Kaufman explores the predominately male customers of guitar stores via their impromptu in-store performances, examining the packaging and stereotyping of identities that these stores perpetuate, the fantasy of rock stardom, and simultaneity of exhibitionism and vulnerability.

Finally, **Shadi Harouni** and **Hilla Toony Navok** complicate the often-gendered binary between “blue collar” work and “white collar” artwork. Shadi Harouni's video *The Lightest of Stones* (2015) depicts the artist pulling pumice stones by hand from a quarry in the mountains near her hometown in Kurdish Iran while male workers question and playfully mock her Sisyphean attempts. The artist and the workers are mutually aware of the different social and economic values of their shared labor, as the workers joke about being shown one day in an American museum.

In the photo series *At work* (2015), Navok enters the workshops and factories that manufactured elements of her sculptures, attending to the particular aesthetics of disorder found in these working spaces occupied mostly by men. Navok intervenes in this environment by replacing an existing calendar, of the kind with a girl of the month or exotic scenery highlighted as an object of desire familiar to such working spaces, with her own abstract “calendar” of drawings without days, weeks, or months.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of programs investigating the relationship between gender, labor, and art. A conversation between activist and teacher **Silvia Federici** and curator and artist **Laurel Ptak** on **Wednesday, November 30**, explores the connections between the International Wages for

Housework Campaign in the 1970s and Wages for Facebook, launched by Ptak in 2013.

On **Friday, December 9**, there will be a special screening of **Zoe Beloff's** *Charming Augustine* (2005), a film inspired by the book *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, a series of photographs and texts on hysteria published by a mental hospital in Paris in the 1880s. An experimental narrative based on the case of a young patient, Augustine, the film explores connections between attempts to document her mental states and the prehistory of narrative film.

## RELATED EVENTS

- **Friday, November 11, 6-8 PM:** Opening reception
- **Wednesday, November 16, 6:30-8 PM:** *Emotional Labor Union Town Hall Meeting Workshop*
- **Friday, November 18, 6:30-8 PM:** *Polite, Pleasant, Endearing: The History of the Smile* performance by Katya Grokhovsky with dancer Jeremy D. Olson
- **Wednesday, November 30, 6:30-8 PM:** *From Wages for Housework to Wages for Facebook*, conversation with Silvia Federici and Laurel Ptak
- **Wednesday, December 7, 6:30-8 PM:** *The Emotional Labor Movement Performance*, Megan Snowe with movement therapist Kendra Kambestad
- **Friday, December 9, 6:30-8 PM:** Screening of Zoe Beloff's film *Charming Augustine*
- **Thursday, December 22, 6:30-8 PM:** *Regarding the state of others*, conversation with Chloë Bass and Naem Mohaiemen

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## CURATOR BIO

**Chelsea Haines** is an independent curator and doctoral candidate in art history at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Haines is currently a Presidential Research Fellow at The Center for the Humanities. Since 2009, she has organized exhibitions and public programs for institutions such as Independent Curators International, Nurture Art, Portland State University, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the Shanghai Biennial, and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School. She has held curatorial residencies and research fellowships at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP), Residency Unlimited, and Artport Tel Aviv. She writes regularly for publications including *Mousse*, *BOMB Magazine*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and the online edition of *Artforum*, and she holds an MA in Visual Culture Theory from New York University.

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