

Short-term pleasure, Long-term pain

Emmanuel Awuni, Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack, Cathrin Hoffmann, Steph Huang, Alexei Izmaylov, Justine Neuberger, Yan Xinyue

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Grab another glass of wine. It soothes the nerves. Takes the edge off. It's amazing how much choice we have these days. How much freedom. Just add to cart. You can be anything you imagine. Power is knowing what you want.

Short-term pleasure, Long-term pain is a group exhibition featuring seven artists exploring the effects of instant gratification upon the human will and our capacity for agency. Here big philosophical questions of self-determination, the management of life, the exercise of freedom, are articulated through aspects of ordinary lived experience, small daily decisions alongside the poetic and extraordinary. It is a question of whether you have that glass of wine to briefly escape from reality, whether you buy that treat you can't afford, or how dependent your self-image is upon that online filter and how estranged this has made you from your own and others' bodies. Does the possibility of short-term pleasure erode our capacity for self-control? Have we become merely reactive creatures, conditioned by stimulus, or so numbed that we are no longer aware of the conditions under which we live?

And what of the other side – the promise that long-term toil will reap rewards? Delayed gratification has become the mark of elite discernment as Pierre Bourdieu observed, while easy or 'facile' pleasures were seen as common – a set of classist values that are essentially built on self-denial. For Theodore Adorno, there were illusory and genuine pleasures, the former often quick and easy, serving to dull social awareness. For Lauren Berlant, contemporary society depends on forms of 'cruel optimism', where what you desire might be the thing preventing you from flourishing, such as the artist working hard for a big break, or those hoping for social mobility in a rigged system. To follow your desire can be the cause of much suffering.

This exhibition reveals how seemingly trivial matters of pleasure and leisure are closely bound to systems of labour and economics, psychological and ecological disaster. Beyond the individual are the global effects of extracting and exporting goods, the rise of sharing economies where community and industry are one and the same, or equating freedom with choice predetermined by society or the marketplace. Life is all about choices. Or is it?

Ground floor

From entrance, left to right

Steph Huang, *Cherry Picker*, 2023, Plywood, MDF, paint, printed copper sheet, hand-blown glass, powder-coated mild steel, copper leaf, 55 x 40.5 x 5 cm, 112 x 35.5 x 11 cm

Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack, *Untitled (Blue)*, 2023, Acrylic, oil pastel on canvas, 182.9 x 121.9 x 3.5 cm

Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack, *Majestic London*, 2023, Acrylic, oil pastel on canvas, 182.9 x 121.9 x 3.5 cm

Staircase

Cathrin Hoffmann, *Escalating In Validity*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 190 x 160 x 4.5 cm

First floor

From entrance, left to right

Justine Neuberger, *From Inside a World Image*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 58 x 74 x 4 cm

Justine Neuberger, *Root Navigators*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 51 x 56 x 3.5 cm

Yan Xinyue, *Twittering #2*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 120 x 100 x 4.5 cm

Steph Huang, *Prawn Cocktail*, 2023, Mild Steel, hand-blown glass, 160 x 12 x 14 cm

Emmanuel Awuni, *Intune with the infinite*, 2023, Crank clay, glaze, steel, 22 x 18 x 13 cm

Emmanuel Awuni, *White*, 2023, Oil on wood, nails, 38 x 45.5 x 4 cm

Yan Xinyue, *Give me one more glass #5*, 2023, Oil on canvas, Corner diptych 20 x 40 x 3.5 cm, 20 x 70 x 3.5 cm

Basement

From entrance, left to right

Alexei Izmaylov, *CHANNELS. GROUP ONE DISTINCT*, 2023, Synthetic polymer, PLA, plug, paint, surface mounted electrical sockets, steel hardware, 38 x 29 x 19 cm

Alexei Izmaylov, *CHANNELS. GROUP TWO BOGGLES*, 2023, Synthetic polymer, PLA, plug, paint, surface mounted electrical sockets, multi-plug adapter, steel hardware, 16 x 44 x 25 cm

Cathrin Hoffmann, *Trotzdem*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 190 x 160 x 4.5 cm

Emmanuel Awuni, *Ouroboros*, 2023, Glazed crank & buff clay, spray paint, oil paint, wood, heavy duty wheels, 98 x 119.5 x 100 cm

Cathrin Hoffmann, *Science Is Indicating*, 2023, Oil on canvas, 140 x 100 x 4.5 cm

Alexei Izmaylov, *CRÈME ANGLAISE*, 2022, Laser cut and powder coated steel, cast silicone, pigment, PLA, synthetic polymer, acrylic paint, CNC cut PVC, UV inkjet print, plastic garment size tag, found insulated wire, climbing rope, heat shrink, liquid plastic rope whip, cable ties, fabric tape, stainless steel and aluminium hardware, stainless steel security screws, 164 x 20 x 44 cm