

Austerity

Eva O'Leary
Ajit Chauhan
Prajakti Jayavant
Rachel Marisa LaBine

July 13, 2023 - August 18, 2023

In 1972 the Club of Rome released a study titled *The Limits of Growth* illustrating the consequence of interactions between the earth and human systems projected over the course of decades in the future. The report detailed *décroissance*, or 'decay', proposing the idea of degrowth to initiate the end of continual growth in a world with limited resources. The idea of reduction presents a rift between our expectation and our understanding of reality. Moving against patterns of growth implies a stark austerity, a world of extreme rationality, and requires an interrogation of excess.

The works herein relate to austerity, or a reduction, either materially or contextually inasmuch as something has been removed or revealed as a condition of severity, an act against excess.

Surface interventions are defined by intentional flatness in Rachel Marisa LaBine's painting *Teresa* (2023). The curious dislocation of the figure and the ground, and an obscuring through the veil of a curtain, considers the subtractive nature that has become part of our world mediated through technology.

Prajakti Jayavant uses ordinary materials like paper, paint and wire to explore form with an interest in allowing the limitations of traditional material to define the parameters of potential. Jayavant's sculptures contemplate the process of change and allow the material body to maintain integrity as a singular object with inherent properties transformed by the effort of contemplation and intuition.

Using containers, casings, and envelopes, Ajit Chauhan employs creation and destruction as intermingled concepts. *April Day*, (2023), is part of a series of sculpture that thinks through the potential of a hanging form as a publication. Using dated ephemera to mimic the shape of a hand-bent acrylic casing suspended in place by four simple nails, *April Day* delivers the first lines of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

In *Spring Break* (2018), Eva O'Leary details milk being poured into the eyes of a teenager in an attempt to offset the effects of tear gas. Set against the trappings of our culture of excess, familiar elements such as a plastic Starbucks cup, acrylic nails, innocuous prefab formica countertop, seek to quell the real event. The formal construction of the image reveals an uncanny resemblance to Caravaggio's *Mary Magdalen in Ecstasy* (1606). As part of a larger body of work in the *Happy Valley* (2014-19) series, O'Leary delivers a stark realism outlining the limits of structural and social systems that continue to perpetuate ideologies of fantasy, power and control.

Ajit Chauhan (1981) lives in the sanctuary city of San Francisco, California. His work has been exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery in London, White Columns NY, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, the Berkeley Art Museum, Asian Art Museum, UC Davis Museum, the Grimm Museum in Berlin, the SONS Museum in Kruishoutem, Belgium, Jack Hanley Gallery, Annarumma Gallery, SVIT Praha, and recently at the KMAC Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. He has an upcoming solo exhibition at Galerie Stadtpark Krems later in 2023.

Prajakti Jayavant has exhibited at the Drawing Center, New York, curated by Luis Camnitzer and at Meridian Gallery, San Francisco in shows separately curated by Lawrence Rinder and John Zarobell. She was a recipient for the Visions from the New California award and for artist in residence fellowships at Djerassi Residence Artists Program and at Headlands Center for the Arts. She holds an MFA from California College of Arts and Crafts, 2001.

Eva O'Leary (1989) received her BFA from California College of the Arts in 2012, and her MFA from Yale School of Art in 2016. She was the recipient of the Outset Unseen Exhibition Fund in 2019, the Hyères Festival Photographie Grand Prix in 2018, The Vontobel Contemporary Photography Prize in 2017, and was named a Foam Talent in 2014. She has exhibited her work internationally, including at the CAFA Art Museum (Beijing), FOAM (Amsterdam), Villa Noailles (Hyeres, France), l'Atelier Néerlandais (Paris), Benaki Museum (Athens), and Aperture Foundation (New York). Her work has been featured in various publications, including *ArtForum*, *Aperture*, *1000 Words*, and *The New Yorker*.

Rachel Marisa LaBine lives and works in New York City. She received her MFA from Columbia University, New York (2019) and her BFA from RISD (2010). LaBine's work has been included in several group exhibitions including *False Flag*, New York (2021), *Night Gallery*, Los Angeles (2019), *Lyles & King*, New York (2017), *Ms Barbers*, Los Angeles (2017) and previously had a solo exhibition at *Fourteen30 Contemporary*, Portland, OR (2019). In 2019 LaBine received the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Award. Bibeau Krueger presented a solo exhibition by LaBine in 2022.