

Work

Céline Mathieu
Paul Niedermayer
Leonie Nagel
Jens Fröberg
Constantin Meunier

Sept 7th - Oct 7th, 2023

“Is the idle mind the devil’s workshop?” asks Joanne B. Ciulla in her *The Working Life*. Rarely has the world seen one of these minds, and yet, the devil’s been around. Idleness opposes work according to the philosopher, whose main argument features a witty twist on the common saying: “All play and no work makes Jack a big jerk,” with which she disagrees. From a curse to a calling and back, from meaningless to meaningful and the other way around, work divides. Praisers fight the predominant economic theories according to which work is necessary pain. Haters battle the praisers. Some even give up saying what it is, claiming that a singular definition is a waste of time. Making the philosophical confusion around work more concrete, Ciulla takes things to the social and points out some widespread schizophrenia, without even mentioning the predominant issues of gender, race, and class: “We live in a paradoxical culture that both celebrates work and continually strives to eliminate it.”

The exhibition *Work* puts forward five arguments about work: Leonie Nagel’s sculpture, an abstracted model of one of her previous exhibitions, features early photographs of house appliances she took and later reworked to bring up issues of domestic labor, artistic career and childcare; Paul Niedermayer’s photographs of drops into a sink seize moments of break from her job in a bar, evoking the dialogue between supplementary and artistic work; Céline Mathieu’s pieces deal with the circulation of personal labored objects, looking into their economics when they shift across different contexts; Jens Fröberg’s paintings suggest artistic work in a classical studio, leaving the technique exposed or concealed in piled layers of paint; Constantin Meunier’s sculpture and etching, depicting the conditions of 19th century workers from a social realistic perspective, provide a hint on how the concept of work has changed throughout history.

BIOS

CÉLINE MATHIEU (b. 1989, Belgium) had recent solo exhibitions at PLUS-ONE Gallery (Antwerp), Sentiment (Zürich) and at Gr_und (Berlin). She was part of group exhibitions at Kunsthal Extra City (Antwerp), Gallery Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris), La Virreina (Barcelona), Mu.Zee (Ostend), Corridor and PuntWG (Amsterdam), CLAPTRAP and AAIR (Antwerp). Her research ‘Conditions for Raw Materials’ is supported by the Royal Academy Antwerp and she will be a resident at Jan Van Eyck Academie Maastricht in 2023-2024.

LEONIE NAGEL (b. 1992, Germany) is an artist living and working in Berlin. She studied at Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, UAL London and UdK Berlin. Most recently she showed work at Nürnberger Kunstverein-Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft and Kunstverein Langenhagen Hannover. She has been a member of the collective Cittipunkt e.V. since 2022 and has taught in the Class for Photography in the field of contemporary Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig since 2021. She was a resident

at la dépendance, St. Imier in Summer 2023. Her artist-book, “Slippery Stairs”, was published with AKV Berlin in 2021.

PAUL NIEDERMAYER (b. 1989, Germany) is an artist living and working in Berlin. Her work has recently been shown at The Wig (Berlin) and Photography Exhibit (Zurich). She will start teaching this fall at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig in the Photography Department. In 2023 she joined the collective Cittipunkt e.V. For the last three years, she's hosted a queer bar in the garden of im M.1 in Hohenlockstedt, Germany.

JENS FRÖBERG (b. 1983, Sweden) graduated from Valand Konsthögskola Göteborg, Sweden, in 2009 and Akademie der bildenden Künste Vienna, Austria in 2017 where he was awarded the Akademiefreundespreis. In 2022, he was also awarded the VERA OCH GÖRAN AGNEKILS Stipendium from the Royal Academy of Arts, Sweden. Recent exhibitions include Claas Reiss at Conceptual Fine Arts (Milan), Wien Museum Musa (Vienna), Rough Continuity at Simian, (Copenhagen) with Lazar Lyutakov. Fröberg has an upcoming solo exhibition with Claas Reiss in London in 2023 and will take part in Reiss's participation in the ACK Art Fair (Kyoto) later this year.

Arguably one of the most popular Belgian artists of his time, CONSTANTIN MEUNIER (1831 – 1905) was a painter and sculptor associated with 19th century realism. He is now best known for his depictions of the working classes, especially workers in the Belgian mines and docks. His artworks are found in major public collections, among them the Royal Museums (Brussels and Antwerp), Musée d'Orsay (Paris), M (Leuven).