

Molitor

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The Contractor

Opening:

11 September 2025

6—10 pm

Exhibition:

12 September —

8 November 2025

The contractor is here in the city with a job to do. The job on this occasion is to produce and exhibit a number of objects for perusal and sale. For ten years now the contractor has been riffing around these ideas of work and labour that once animated the field of production, though lately the contractor has been feeling his age and everyone seems to have at least three jobs, the contractor notwithstanding. In any case, there are kids to feed. Parents everywhere will do almost anything to feed their children. Even the bourgeois circles in which the contractor now spends his working life are no exception to this rule.

According to Contractor Marx, the fact that the contractor feels alienated from his own public is an occupational hazard and not in the least bit unusual or exceptional. The contractor had come of age intellectually while parading his virtual person around social media: prior to that, the contractor held a series of service jobs in which the customer was always sovereign. Perhaps because of all this the contractor spent years hung up on service and performance, which amount to the same thing: modes of doing in which the other is projected into the frame and present even when out of view. There is a sociality to this phenomenon that finds its object in the notion of [having] an audience. The contractor is aware that everything he does is somehow intended for this other, but the function of the relationship has become obscure.

In part this is down to the fact that a genocide has laid bare what everyone already knew: that all this work and labour, at every level of production, in every field and every city, only serves to reinforce a war machine. And the war machine is the habitus and the conduit and the vessel and arches over everything, like heaven. It's hard for the contractor to imagine a way in which his objects could retain any semblance of meaning under the circumstances, but then again, thinks the contractor, who even cares? He's just doing his job. In this country especially, thinks the contractor, people understand this rationale. And really, there are worse jobs. Far worse. And everybody has to work.

There is something to say about this place in the heart of the economic fortress, the relentlessness of an ungrieved history, of disavowal as a

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psychoanalytic mechanism that creates its own shape in the hollow of what is never said or expressed. There's something to say about the growth of an economy as a psychic correlate to raising children. How growth is figured and configured, optimised and restricted at all the appropriate junctures. How these philosophies come to live in buildings, bodies, language and signs. About the forbidden longing for what is wild and unrestrained. About the way that plants, animals and children stand in as symbols for that thing. About the way that everything living must be controlled and corralled against the chaos in the heart of the shape at the centre of the hollow. What the contractor wanted to say. Something for which words feel inadequate. Something heavy enough to necessitate a safety code around its handling in the workplace, and the contractor feels too weak for the job.

The contractor has often been in some form of therapy, an invention of the modern project in which the mind is brought into the realm of manageable objects like coins, commodities and children. Certain therapeutic discourses hold that nothing is inexpressible; it is, in fact, the non-expression that causes trouble, and if only this can be reversed then the life force can flow once more, with self-expression as its happy analogue. Because the contractor was at some stage resistant to this approach he was referred to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, optimised for getting contractors back to work. In Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, contractors need not necessarily express themselves so long as they remain functional. I'm just doing my job, ma'am, says the contractor to a journalist who asks about the work. And there isn't much more to say.

These days the contractor thinks a lot about the limits of expression. It all strains uselessly across a matrix of ruin. But the contractor will get the job done somehow.