

Six Notes On Working - D. A. Whitcraft

1. Avoid aestheticizing crisis and build slow recognition, something capitalism works hard to suppress

Make systems of control legible through form and rhythm

Make pressure, decay, or surplus visible without centering victimhood or heroism

Refuse immediacy; set conditions for longer attention spans

Register practice as an unlearning tool, counter to dominant sensory economies

2. Ground abstraction in site, labor, and process

Let materials carry the conditions of their extraction or transformation

Make visible the conditions of labor involved (mine as well as others) without literalizing

Collaborate with people who have material knowledge (ceramicists, miners, land workers) in ways that refuse instrumentalization, with the goal of building a material politics without relying on overt slogans

3. Involve art spaces to prototype shared world-making

Temporal experiments in slowness, refusal, or speculative restoration

Zones where people practice non-extractive attention

Environments that invite presence without mastery

Avoid spectacle, entertainment, and high-theory performance

Allow viewers to sit with systems they usually ignore as an inherently political act

4. Align structurally with movements without speaking for or symbolizing them

Share resources (space, tools, contacts)

Document the slow violence that policy or protest often cannot easily address

Collaborate mindfully; let the terms be shaped by others (Indigenous, land-based, or labor movements)

Be part of a distributed ecosystem of resistance

5. Move through institutions strategically

Redirect resources toward overlooked collaborators

Shift institutional attention toward extraction, logistics, or memory

Make space for underrepresented voices without tokenization

Keep the structural logic of the work intact when entering institutional settings

6. Speak plainly where it counts, as a political choice

Cut through cultural abstraction and jargon

Reach across class or institutional divides

Model a kind of clear seeing that neoliberal aesthetics attempt to dissolve

Build clarity that resists simplification while making complexity encounterable