**working conditions**

***working***is defined as

having paid employment,

functioning or able to function,

the way in which a machine, organization, or system operates; the manner of functioning or operating,

exertion or effort directed to produce or accomplish something; labor; toil. productive or operative activity.

***conditions***are defined as

circumstances indispensable to some result; prerequisite; that on which something else is contingent,

something which must happen or be done in order for something else to be possible,

the circumstances affecting the way in which people live or work, especially with regard to their safety or well-being,

the state of something with regard to its appearance, quality, or working order.

**working condition (plural working conditions) a definition that is chosen for an occasion and may not fully conform with established or authoritative definitions. Not knowing of established definitions would be grounds for selecting or devising a working condition.**

The project positions itself as an ongoing work in several iterations, or volumes, expanding across media over time. These volumes will take such forms as performance activations, publications, conversations, events, gestures, and media interventions. **working conditions** seeks to engage broadly with collaborators. It is activated at the conjunction of art / work.

Conceived as a container for the broader themes that obsess and distress: a system which is nearly universally deplored and yet which (it seems) we may be powerless to extricate ourselves from

Among its core questions, **working conditions** asks:

Under what set of conditions is it possible to experience joy and take pleasure in work?

Are there ways to disengage from an oppressive system at some level, even while inextricably mired in it?

What liberatory potentials still exist?

What constitutes the current condition of work ?

CONTENTS:

vol. 1 – **the set of circumstances - in which we define what is**

 **meant by *working conditions* as a shared experience.**

A clinician asks a set of esoteric, seemingly unrelated questions in a calm and measured voice. Sometimes these questions seem to be more of a recitation of mathematical formulae; sometimes these questions seem to be more of a choral arrangement. It’s clear that the research may be flawed, or that the experiment’s aims may be different than purported, but the subjects remain unfazed.

The process of data collection can be understood as a performance, or a series of performative actions, yet all the while the information that is being collected is in fact being used to support or disprove an emerging hypothesis, which is unstated. So though its methods may be (in fact, certainly are) flawed, the initial impression is one of competence based on the presence of certain repetitive scripts that evoke the sense of an overarching bureaucratic organization.

vol. 2 – **LEGOLAND**

the structure of the “castle” is navigated as a framework. The REALMS OF LABOR have many rooms: some are obviously dungeons or spaces of penury, others are gilded, but aren’t they all simply under the domain of the king?

(a set of working conditions that serve as counterpoints to the circumstances investigated in vol.3. and the first of a two-part positioning of a sharp critique of the current structuring of instructional labor in academia).

vol. 3 – **the adjunct commuter (revisited)**

prolonged meditation on Dushko Petrovich’s publication of the same name, and the continued reality of adjunct labor. In-depth comparison of adjuncting and other part-time low-wage labor realities.

vol. 4 – **the poor farm**

it was better than jail. Or was it? working conditions, poverty, and how nothing has really changed.

*Living in the Play: the Poor Farm Experiment*

art / work: is it possible for a problematic history to be held in collective memory? What happens when the keys are no longer needed?

vol. 5 – **my fair ladies**

considering the art fair, the county fair, and all that’s not fair in art and elsewhere. Spaces of potential where the potential is never fully realized. No one goes off script.

vol. 6 – **feudal systems (or, who has the keys to the castle?)**

vol. 7 - **late-stage capitalism & the stock market**

an analysis of day trading as a potential form of creating an independent micro-economy.

Durational performance that doubles as an instructional guide to active trading.

vol. 8 – **temporary & unintentional labor**

indentured servitude, slavery, & feudal systems. Revisiting the imagery, associations, and conceptualizations associated with the castle. Asking not (whether or not) these forms of labor still exist, but only in what ways the naming conventions have changed.

vol. 9 – **whore feminism & the world’s oldest profession**

laboring under capitalism is essentially inseparable from prostitution. So how can we choose our masters?

Is sex work finally fully realized as liberatory thanks to technological innovation?

vol. 10 – **Little Plastic Castle**

(if this sea is endless and there is no land, where then is the castle?)

The castle must lie beneath the waves: seemingly as benign as the décor in a goldfish bowl. The structure, it seems, is of no use to the fish. If it has a purpose, what purpose does it serve?

Epilogue - **On the Museum’s Ruins (after Douglas Crimp)**

**Working Conditions: Project Statement**

*Working Conditions* is a transmedia exploration of labor, its structures, and its lived realities, conceived as an evolving series of investigations into the systems that shape our experiences of work. Positioned at the intersection of art and labor, the project critiques the pervasive, often oppressive mechanisms that define modern working life while seeking moments of liberation, joy, and possibility within these confines. Each volume operates as both a self-contained inquiry and a piece of the broader conversation, engaging collaborators and audiences through diverse media forms, including performance, publications, and durational experiments.

At its core, *Working Conditions* grapples with the tension between systemic control and individual agency. It interrogates labor across its many domains—academic precarity, historical exploitations, contemporary gig economies, and the unyielding demands of late-stage capitalism. These volumes unearth the patterns and myths underpinning labor, such as the promises of meritocracy, the allure of gilded opportunity, and the systemic inequities concealed within frameworks of progress and fairness.

Through constructs like the “castle,” which recurs as both a metaphorical and literal symbol of feudal hierarchies, the project critiques the enduring power structures that replicate themselves across time. From the adjunct commuter’s circuitous toil to the fleeting spaces of potential in fairs and art markets, the works reveal the intersections of labor, class, and cultural production.

Yet, *Working Conditions* is not without hope. It actively seeks liberatory potentials, asking how art might hold space for collective memory and radical reimagining. By blending esoteric questioning with performative data collection, durational practices, and collaborative experimentation, the project blurs boundaries between critique and creation. It imagines alternative futures where work may not be escape-proof, but perhaps, it can become less mechanized and more human. *Working Conditions* positions itself as a living inquiry, inviting us all to reflect on how—and under what conditions—we labor.