

Prime

'New vacancies tend to be fixed term, until further notice and part-time. They are often combined with other occupations and deprived of any safeguards of continuity, let alone of permanence. The catchword is flexibility, and this increasingly fashionable notion stands for a game of hire and fire with very few rules attached, but with power to change the rules unilaterally while the game is still being played'

Zygmunt Bauman, 'Work, consumerism and the new poor.'

Within our contemporary society employment can be another way in which duty as consumer is fulfilled. Through their aesthetic criteria, jobs play many varying roles in shaping our identities. The experience-seeking nature of culture is reinforced through employment by the increased structuring of jobs to coincide with the demands of the economy upon capitalist industry. Short-term and temporary contracts along with the threat of outsourcing give rise to impermanent and insecure employment for workers whose flexibility is a prerequisite. Leading to fewer rights, less benefits and diminishing employer responsibility and resulting in a cheaper, more expendable, ultimately loyalty free workforce.

It is commonplace for artists to work on a freelance basis. Although without the same market constraints that are placed upon commercial business, the cultural sector is a highly competitive arena with fewer job opportunities than there are artists and limited amounts of public funding available. Therefore in order to support themselves while continuing to make art some artists take jobs within other industries - sometimes those with fast turnovers, few prospects and minimal wages. The effect of dealing with their economic realities has resulted in some artists becoming concerned with shrinking the gap between work-life and art-life. As Ute Meta Bauer states in her text 'Education, Information, Entertainment',

'More and more activities devoted to "earning a living" are becoming incorporated into current forms of art practice, as artists grow weary of neglecting their everyday realities....'

PRIME is any number of placements into work situations in order to examine the notion of part-time work and its relationship to the contemporary artist. Initially, PRIME will collaborate with a number of artist associates towards gaining them paid employment. This employment must be part-time and ongoing – each placement lasting for a minimum of one month and continuing until the associate decides to terminate. At no time during the placement must the employer be made aware of PRIME. In return, each associate will receive a commissioning fee alongside the wage paid by the placement company. The fee is to cover work done outside of placement hours towards developing an outcome. The outcome will take the form that the associate sees fit and is subject to negotiation with PRIME.

A publication documenting the project will contain a series of commissioned texts that critically investigate the issues raised. The texts will be initiated in consideration of the following themes:

- Mirroring Reality.
- Misusing Work and Wasting Time.
- Employee in Residence.
- Roles and Identities.
- Me Inc. and McJobs.