

The Dice Are Loaded (2011 - present, ongoing)

The Dice Are Loaded was initially conceived of as a way to pose a question with a painting or object about accumulation and value. It began as a response to Occupy: thinking about the place of art-making and the market for its product - the art object. Translating portions of Marx's *Capital* into abstract paintings that were in themselves a visual accumulation of rote labor seemed like a productive tautology. At a certain point it became clear that the work should participate in an expanded way in the process its textual content examines.

Outsourcing the labor for subsequent paintings in the series allows for an act of (temporary) job creation - a small economy - and aligns more closely with the process that Marx examines. I like the idea of the empowered laborer - even in the context of art production where the idea of authorship is paramount regardless of the hands on the work. At the same time, purchasing labor has been fraught for me as a maker.

There is also a humor underlying the series- admittedly a dark humor. The translation of a translation of a translation certainly contains absurdity. I feel like I'm either completely deflating the idea of value (of my own work!) or I'm watching for that alchemical moment when an accumulation of marks becomes more than itself.

The Dice are Loaded
gouache on panel, 24" x 24"
2011 - 2012

Les dés sont pipés. Capital works on both sides at the same time. If its accumulation, on the one hand, increases the demand for labour, it increases on the other the supply of labourers by the "setting free" of them, whilst at the same time the pressure of the unemployed compels those that are employed to furnish more labour, and therefore makes the supply of labour, to a certain extent, independent of the supply of labourers. The action of the law of supply and demand of labour on this basis completes the despotism of capital. As soon, therefore, as the labourers learn the secret, how it comes to pass that in the same measure as they work more, as they produce more wealth for others, and as the productive power of their labour increases, so in the same measure even their function as a means of the self-expansion of capital becomes more and more precarious for them; as soon as they discover that the degree of intensity of the competition among themselves depends wholly on the pressure of the relative surplus population [...]

The Dice are Loaded (C. Bryan Ramey)
gouache on panel, 24" x 24"
2014

The capitalist buys labour-power in order to use it; and labour-power in use is labour itself. The purchaser of labour-power consumes it by setting the seller of it to work. By working, the latter becomes actually, what before he only was potentially, labour-power in action, a labourer. In order that his labour may re-appear in a commodity, he must, before all things, expend it on something useful, on something

capable of satisfying a want of some sort. Hence, what the capitalist sets the labourer to produce, is a particular use-value, a specified article. The fact that the production of use-values, or goods, is carried on under the control of a capitalist and on his behalf, does not alter the general character of that production. We shall, therefore, in the first place, have to consider the labour-process independently of the particular form it assumes under given social conditions.

The Dice are Loaded (Susan Metrican)

gouache on panel, 24" x 24"

2014

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labour that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labour-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human.

The Dice are Loaded (Erin Pointdexter)

gouache on panel, 24" x 24"

2014

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be.

The Dice are Loaded (Laura Braciale)

gouache on panel, 24" x 24"

2014

In the labour-process, therefore, man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the commencement, in the material worked upon. The process disappears in the product, the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man. Labour has incorporated itself with its subject: the former is materialised, the latter transformed. That which in the labourer appeared as movement, now appears in the product as a fixed quality without motion. The blacksmith forges and the product is a forging.