

Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival logo by Annelise Keestra.

Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival

Furtherfield Gallery, Finsbury Park, London

14 July - 19 August 2018

Sat - Sun, 11:00 - 17:00 or by appointment

Private View: Friday 13 July 18:00-20:00

**Would you like to monetise your social relations?
Learn from hostile designs? Take part in (unwitting)
data extractions in exchange for public services?**

Examining the way that the boundaries between 'play' and 'labour' have become increasingly blurred, this summer, *Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival*, will transform Furtherfield Gallery into an immersive environment comprising a series of games. Offering glimpses into the gamification of all forms of life, visitors are asked to test the operations of the real world, and, in the process, experience how forms of play and labour feed mechanisms of work, pleasure, and survival.

What it means to be a worker is expanding and, over the last decade, widening strategies of surveillance and new sites of spectatorship online have forced another evolution in what can be called 'leisure spaces'. From the self-made celebrity of the Instafamous to the live-streaming of online gamers, many of us shop, share and produce online, 24/7. In certain sectors, the seeming convergence of play and labour means work is sold as an extension of our personalities and, as work continues to evolve and adapt to online cultures, where labour occurs, what is viewed as a product, and even our sense of self, begins to change.

Today, workers are asked to expand their own skills and build self-made networks to develop new avenues of work, pleasure and survival. As they do, emerging forms of industry combine the techniques and tools of game theory, psychology and data science to bring marketing, economics and interaction design to bear on the most personal of our technologies – our smartphones and our social media networks. Profiling personalities through social media use, using metrics to quantify behaviour

and conditioning actions to provide rewards, have become new norms online. As a result, much of public life can be seen as part of a process of 'capturing play in pursuit of work'.



Cassie Thornton, *Feminist Economics Yoga (FEY)*

Although these realities affect many, very little time is currently given over to thinking about the many questions that arise from the blurring between work and play in an age of increasingly data-driven technologies: how are forms of 'playbour' impacting our health and well-being? What forms of resistance could and should communities do in response?



Arjun Harrison-Mann, *Not Relevant*

To gain a deeper understanding of the answers to these questions, we worked with artists, designers, activists, sociologists and researchers in a three-day co-creation research lab in May 2018. The group engaged in artist-led experiments and playful scenarios, conducting research with fellow participants acting as 'workers' to generate new areas of knowledge. This exhibition in Furtherfield Gallery is the result of this collective labour and each game simulates an experience of how techniques of gamification, automation and surveillance are applied to the everyday in the (not yet complete) capture of all forms of existence into wider systems of work.

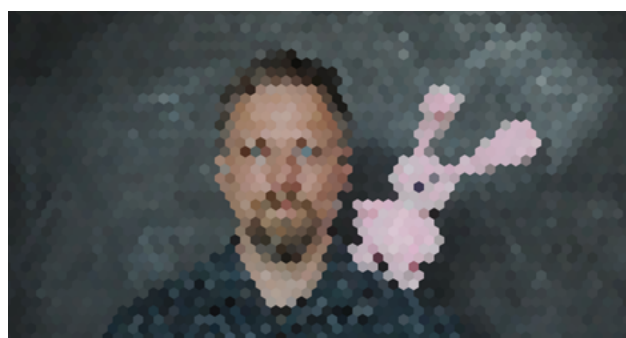
In addition to a performance by Steven Ounanian during the Private View, the 'games' that comprise this exhibition are:

- *Public Toilet* by Arjun Harrison-Mann & Benjamin Redgrove, which asks visitors whether the Furtherfield building should be a gallery or a toilet... and also who has the right to make this type of decision.



Marija Bozinovska Jones, *Treebour*

- *Treebour* by Marija Bozinovska Jones (with special thanks to Robert Gallagher) is a sound work in which three anthropomorphised 'trees' personify the different kinds of work trees are required to do in contemporary society.
- *Feminist Economics Yoga (FEY)* by Cassie Thornton, The Feminist Economics Department (FED), invites us to think about how our screen addictions connect us to the predatory workings of the economy at large.
- *Hostile Environment Facility Training (HEFT)* by Michael Straeubig enables visitors to create their own 'hostile environment', a design approach used by governments in a variety of settings - schools, banks, universities, hospitals, places of work - to make staying in this country as difficult as possible for migrants.



Michael Straeubig, *Hostile Environment Facility Training (HEFT)*

In the lead up to Furtherfield's *Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival* exhibition **Maria Dada**, **Miranda Hall** and **Cassie Thornton** will be taking over our social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Each micro-commission is an online space to take in different directions, related ideas and themes of #playbour.

Our first week kicks off with **Maria Dada**. Researcher in the fields of design and material culture, Dada's *Confessional Viral Hoax Engine* brings together an interest in the infrastructures and processes used to spread misinformation online with themes of transparency, anxiety and virtue signalling.

The second week is headed by **Miranda Hall**, who is a freelance journalist and research assistant at SOAS specialising in digital labour.

In the final week, **Cassie Thornton**, artist, activist and feminist economist, will take over Furtherfield's social media channels. You can learn more about her on her website feministeconomicsdepartment.com and her new project is being launched on Kickstarter at kck.st/2tMFK9Q. Her takeover explores ideas surrounding yoga, feminist economics, class war, collective revenge and social technology.



Photo of Steven Levon Ounanian's workshop session *The Group Limb* as part of *Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival Lab*, May 2018.

Playbour is curated by Dani Admiss.

Lab session leads and participants: Dani Admiss, Kevin Biderman, Marija Bozinovska Jones, Ruth Catlow, Maria Dada, Robert Gallagher, Beryl Graham, Miranda Hall, Arjun Harrison-Mann, Maz Hemming, Sanela Jahic, Annelise Keestra, Steven Levon Ounanian, Manu Luksch, Itai Palti, Andrej Primožic, Michael Straeubig, Cassie Thornton, Cecilia Wee and Jamie Woodcock.

Dani Admiss is an independent curator and researcher working across art, design and networked cultures. Her work employs world-building and co-creation to explore changes happening to our social, technological and ecological contexts. She is particularly interested in working with others to understand not-yet completed transformations of body, society and the earth into global capitalist systems. She is the founder of *Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival*, an art and research platform dedicated to the study of the worker in an age of data technologies. daniadmiss.com

Kevin Biderman is a lecturer, filmmaker and researcher based in London. He is currently undertaking an AHRC-funded PhD at the Royal College of Art examining visual surveillance in the City of London. www.rca.ac.uk/students/kevin-biderman-15735/

Marija Bozinovska Jones explores links between social, computational and neural architectures. Her work revolves around formation of identity in an era of technocapitalist amplification and perpetual online presence. marijabozinovskajones.com/

Ruth Catlow is an artist co-founder and artistic director of Furtherfield, working with emancipatory network cultures, practices and poetics. ruthcatlow.net/

Maria Dada is a researcher and creative technologist investigating possibilities of the digital in transforming socio-political and economic structures.

Beryl Graham is Professor of New Media Art and co-founder and editor of CRUMB, the resource for curators of new media art. www.berylgraham.com/cv/index.htm

Miranda Hall is a freelance journalist and research assistant at SOAS specialising in digital labour. mirandahall.contently.com/

Arjun Harrison-Mann is a designer, activist and advocate for dialogue, whose practice proposes the role of dialogical design and reflective machines in post-visual communication. arjunhm.co.uk/

Maz Hemming is an enby whose projects include creating assets for video games and creating a comic series about the Gunpowder Plot. mazhemart.co.uk/

Robert Gallagher is a postdoctoral researcher with the Ego Media project, an ERC-funded investigation of the impact of new media on practices of self-representation

and conceptions of identity.
kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/robert.gallagher.html

Sanela Jahic is an intermedia artist, who constructs visual and technologically-supported kinetic objects and installations. sanelajahic.com/about/

Annelise Keesstra is a visual, interaction and video designer who plays with creative technologies, graphics, video and CAD tools. annelisekeestra.com

Steven Levon Ounanian is a self-initiated researcher into emerging technologies, using collaborative experiments and public interventions to prototype future scenarios. www.stevenlevon.com/

Manu Luksch is an artist and filmmaker who scrutinises the effects of network technologies on social relations, urban space and political structures. www.manuluksch.com

Itai Palti is a practicing architect and researcher focusing on designing with the human experience in mind. www.ccities.org/user/itai-palti/

Joana Pestana is a designer tracing the intersection of the physical and digital worlds. joanapestana.com

Andrej Primožic is one part project manager, two parts engineer, one part geek and one part gamer. Besides that, also a quite un-famous amateur photographer - capturing uneventful urban landscapes - preferably at night, posting quite regularly under various anonymous accounts on Tumblr and Instagram.

Michael Straeubig is a game designer / creative coder exploring games and playful experiences in various media. www.i3games.de/i3Games/Hello.html

Cassie Thornton is an artist, activist and referred to as the Feminist Economics Department. feministeconomicsdepartment.com

Cecilia Wee is an independent curator, producer, researcher and educator working across experimental sound, performance, visual art and design practices. www.ceciliawe.com/about.html

Jamie Woodcock is a sociologist of work currently involved in the Fairwork Foundation, a project about online labour platforms. www.jamiewoodcock.net/projects/

INTERNET CONFESSIONS

Dani Admiss

When I was 16 I was in a band. I couldn't sing that well so I used to write lyrics (about vampires) and put them into Babelfish to translate them into French thinking it made me sound automatically cooler.

@daniadmiss

Kevin Biderman

First met you in a dial up world: green block letters on a black screen. Later we traversed through neon colours, pixelated images and imperfect designs. I always knew you were an army brat born out of apocalyptic fears but I never thought you'd turn your back on the counter-culture who raised you. Maybe there will be a third act...

@act3

Marija Bozinovska Jones

The internet has concurrently enhanced and diminished life, yet I appear no longer able to recall life before it. Adding to Jameson's quote: it is easier to imagine the end of the world, than the end of TECHNOcapitalism.

Ruth Catlow

I am a recovering Web Utopian - decentralised infrastructure does not, it turns out, lead automatically to decentralised power. However I am still most excited by art that happens in wild flows, through collaboration on open channels, rather than being owned, certified and traded like dead matter. I am Ruth and I am one of the voices and pairs of eyes.

@furtherfield

Maria Dada

I regularly translate whole books from German to English using Google Translate. I then take the transcripts and print them using lulu.com. I take pride in the design of the covers for each book. Not all of them are unreadable, but most of them just sit on my shelf untouched.

@mariadada

Beryl Graham

I confess:

To buying a mobile phone so that I could text my sweetie.

To being mildly obsessed with weather apps that work best in the North.

To using online dating 15 years ago. The respectable

Guardian rather than Tindr of course - hey I'm not an animal.

@berylgraham

Miranda Hall

After school, my friend and I would take screenshots of penises on ChatRoulette then save them in a desktop folder on the family computer called 'cool fish'

@Miranda__Hall

Arjun Harrison-Mann

For much longer than I would care to admit, every since I got msn at the age of 12, my msn profile picture was (and I just checked, still is), a photoshopped collage of Michael Jordan.

@arjun_harrisonmann

Maz Hemming

When I was 11, lying about my age to sign up on msn chat to chat about neopets, I ended up as one of the chatroom moderators, which sometimes ended up with me leaving the window open to idle overnight (or the room would close). On the bonus side, when my parents ended up with a bill at the end of the month of £200 (which I didn't know would happen), we did get broadband. Much cheaper.

@MazHem_

Robert Gallagher

The unread emails in my inbox currently outnumber my Twitter followers by a factor of 47.7461024499 to 1.

@r_gealga

Sanela Jahic

Once my inbox got flooded with promotions of an online store. So my boyfriend and I composed a simple bot, which took random quotes from our sci-fi eBooks collection and posted them as customer reviews on their product pages.

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

Mask Making for Children

Sunday 22 July and 12 August 2018, 11:00 - 16:30

Furtherfield Gallery

FREE



FURTHERFIELD GALLERY

Furtherfield Gallery is located in the middle of Finsbury Park attracting large numbers of diverse visitors reflecting the Gallery's unusual location. Jenny Judova of Fad magazine picked Furtherfield Gallery as one of the top five galleries in London that show new media art and ArtSlant featured Furtherfield Gallery in 'The Best Non-Profit Art Spaces in London'.

McKenzie Pavilion, Finsbury Park
London N4 2NQ

T: +44 (0) 7737 002879

E: info@furtherfield.org

W: www.furtherfield.org

ABOUT FURTHERFIELD

Furtherfield is an internationally renowned arts organisation specialising in labs, exhibitions and debate for increased, diverse participation with emerging technologies. At Furtherfield Gallery and Furtherfield Commons in London's Finsbury Park, we engage more people with digital creativity, reaching across barriers through unique collaborations with international networks of artists, researchers and partners. Through art, Furtherfield seeks new imaginative responses as digital culture changes the world and the way we live.

www.furtherfield.org

PARTNERS

This project would not have been possible without the kind support of our partners:



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Co-funded by the
**Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union**

This project has been funded with the support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

STATE MACHINES

Playbour: Work, Pleasure, Survival, is realized in the framework of State Machines, a joint project by Aksioma (SI), Drugo More (HR), Furtherfield (UK), Institute of Network Cultures (NL) and NeMe (CY).



Outlandish

