

de Appel Amsterdam

On the poverty of lived experience Three evenings about lived experience in capitalist times

In our capitalist time, experience is commodified, valorized, sold, bought, and marketed. That is to say, if one accepts the idea that the market's logic has colonized every corner of life, the very experience of being alive appears to form the raw materials and products of systemic exploitation. Feminist movements have taught us that the personal and the political –or structural– cannot be separated. Indeed, the personal is political, but that is not to be understood in its mere insertion into political discourses. Instead, the personal is inherently political in that it is bound to existing structures of language, economy, and the material context in which we live.

In other words, one's affective life is not one's private business. But haven't we all learned to treat it as such? Aren't we inclined to believe that our experiences are our personal properties, ones that determine our worth and value in the capitalist market? And who isn't confronted daily with the demand to manage their lives, affects, and suffering like an entrepreneur of one's experience, assessing what is profitable, productive, worth displaying, and what magnifies one's singularity?

Art workers are (possibly) the most affected by this imperative. Split between displaying their lived experience and refraining from doing so, what other strategies could they employ to work-through the impoverishment of experience, the convergence between capitalism's tendency to hijack affect, and the possibilities of its radical critique? The series *On the poverty of lived experience*, developed by researcher Mohamad Dib, sheds light on daring and self-reflective performative practices invested in working-through these questions, while mobilizing language to register the affective structures of the present and exposing the material conditions that produce them.

Intervention I
Stefa Govaart, *Cocks had*
Wednesday 24 August, 18:30



Stefa Govaart, *Cleft (cocks)*, 2017
Graphite and pencil on paper

Cocks had is a performative reading that flirts with language, not in its presumed neutrality as a means of communication but as a tool of enjoyment. With this work, Govaart continues to belabor the audience's and their own anticipatory feelings/facts/thoughts as far as critiques of capitalism and queer antinormativity are concerned. Employing fragments from the reaction-heavy dailiness of social media, and their own theoretical practice, Govaart moves us from the question of "who is enjoying?" to "what is enjoying?", asking us to consider the links between our own affective lives and systemic enjoyment under capitalism.

About the artist

Stefa Govaart is a dancer and performer. Their work aims to stage the charge of language, focusing on receptivity, sex, negativity and money. They assist and collaborate, and are held by the trouble and labor of relationships. They live in Brussels, soon New York.