

STOP



WORK



STOP WORK



18 OCTOBER – 22 NOVEMBER 2025

ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA



MICHAEL CANDY
NICHOLAS CAPALDO
SAMRAING CHEA
DAVID FITZPATRICK
MARTIN FORSTER
LYCHANDRA GIESEMAN
PASCALE GIORGI
CAMERON GRESSWELL
CHRISTIAN HANSEN
RAKHI JAMES
ADRIAN LAZZARO
CATHY STAUGHTON

CURATED BY
LOREN KRONEMYER



STOP WORK

The old joke about the factory of the future needing one man and a dog—the dog to guard the factory and the man to feed the dog—is becoming reality.

1983 November 5, The Age, Section: Saturday Extra, Invasion of the robots, Quote Page 4, Column 8, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

What was work? Here is what I know. Every weekday of my childhood, my parents would go to work from approximately 8 am until 6 pm. At school, my teachers would ask my classmates and I questions like: “what do you want to be when you grow up?”. In my free time, my peers and I would role play a variety of jobs, from veterinarian, to hairdresser, to firefighter, to shopkeep, to scientist, to construction worker, each an invitation to don different imaginary hats, accessories and identities. This is how I learned what work was.

Now things don’t feel so straightforward. The past twenty years have complicated the act of exchanging labour for money in ways that my childhood self could never have imagined. The idea of work, the right to work, and fair work resonate as fundamentally as ever, but the practicalities have gotten harder to manage. In 1983, The Age published a mordant joke about the factory of the future. It has two employees: one, a dog to guard the machines, and the other, a man to feed the dog. Over 40 years later, this quip still hits close to home, except now the dog is made by Boston Dynamics. Could my younger self have ever dreamed of working a bullshit job content farming in the gig economy, scamming subscriptions to enshittified vapourware?

The concept of a ‘steady job’ has never been more unsteady. In an



4.

era of polycrisis, hyperinflation, and superintelligence, it's nearly impossible to predict what employment will look like in even twelve months time. For us guard dogs, this overwhelming uncertainty presents a type of opportunity. As told by anthropologist David Graeber in his 2013 essay *A Practical Utopian's Guide to the Coming Collapse*: "We might be forced to conclude that the real business of human life is not contributing toward something called "the economy" (a concept that didn't even exist three hundred years ago), but the fact that we are all, and have always been, projects of mutual creation." In this version, the man and the dog are both engaging in a mutual nurturance, guarding and feeding one another as creative practice.

Stop Work is an exhibition of artworks that act as proposals to remake the purpose, shape,

and meaning of work in our collective experience. The artists in this exhibition offer singular perspectives on the imploding norms of labour. They reflect on what work once was, what it is now, and what it might become – drawn from lived experiences that challenge conventional understandings of productivity.

The exhibition opens with Nicholas Capaldo's *Untitled*, a 2017 drawing of a Hellenic inventors, astronomers, and architects at work. Rendered in the colour and style of a Grecian vase, this piece represents the classical image of human minds in pursuit of enlightenment and fulfilment. The iconography of Greek scholars has endured as the platonic ideal of an innovative society, complicated by the fact that their achievements were only made possible by the outsourcing of agricultural and manual labour to enslaved people. This hasn't

stopped present-day oligarchs from trying to draw comparison: In 2024, Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg was photographed wearing a shirt inscribed with the Greek phrase "πάθει μάθος," a quote from the ancient tragedian Aeschylus meaning "learning through suffering."

A series of drawings from Martin Forster (2017-2018) offer a different framework for labour as a means to enlightenment. Forster's practice is methodical and devotional, working with pencil and paper to translate global brands into cascading, evocative grids of colour. The series presented here includes works titled *Coke* (2018), *Maxi Coke* (2018), *Pepsi Max Coke* (2018), and *Maxi Pepsi Coke* (2018), suggesting potentially limitless synergies and iterations. Forster liberates the brands from their incessant need to market, offering instead a far more nourishing potential for time spent in deep practice. This task is echoed in the works of Cam Gresswell (2019-2022), who captures hit music in the form of systematic, yet expressively coloured drawings. This music is distilled alongside its commercial and tactile information on the page. Just like a needle draws sounds from a vinyl record to project into the air, Gresswell's hands grasp sounds to inscribe them back onto paper, acting as a human conversation partner between archival mediums.

Artists are quick to stray from the assembly line, offering a healthy

spirit of play and taste for sabotage. Tapping and rattling in the corner of the gallery is *Chair* (2010), an early work by Australian robotic art connoisseur Michael Candy, offering a seat that is both animate and non-compliant. Elsewhere, the latest pieces from the series *Shirts* (2025) by David Fitzpatrick recreate work shirts in folded, bent, and weathered metal. Fitzpatrick, an underground mine worker living in Queenstown, Tasmania, has transitioned to living as an artist using the material residue of the extraction economy. Elsewhere, in a more utopian Fordist future, we find Lychandra Geiseman's *Centrefolds* (2024), depicting back page pinups of muscle cars as willing lovers, auto bodies and human bodies both fully customised. The labor of self-optimisation takes on sardonic, mythological significance with Pascale Giorgi's *Mephistophelux Red Light Therapy Mask* (2025), the promise to extended superficial youth casting a warm, but sinister, glow.

The works *Self Portrait* (2021) and *Robot* (2022) by Adrian Lazzaro suggest a more intimate, ambiguous relationship between the human body and the robot body, both posed as animate subjects worthy of empathy. Robotics are further de-optimised in the work of Cathy Staughton, showing a Boston Dynamics Spot robot ascending to heaven as an angel. Her title, *God Death Sky Day Dog Robot Angel Bed* (2022) recalls a memory from a past that we haven't lived yet, extending

the friendship of dog, human, and machine into the afterlife.

Stop Work, the title of this exhibit, references a type of regulatory order issued to non-compliant work zones. The phrase became more common through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and has stayed relevant into the emergence of speculative super-intelligent economy. The pandemic is still being understood in relation to its impact on employment, prompting global shifts in supply chains, remote work behaviour, and nation-wide experiments with universal basic income. Christian Hansen captures the feeling of 2020 in emotionally honest detail. *Last One* (2024) shows an office building stripped of all occupants but one, the lonely figure swimming among the institutional geometry. Rendered with gentle gestures and muted colours, *Just A Rest* (2024) and *Untitled* (2020) capture the lonely, but sweet clarity and quiet of a world which has stopped moving. The vibrant colour, motion, and chatter of life flood back through the work of Samraing Chea and Rakhi James. These portraits of a busy truck stop and restaurant remind us that work and care, effort and play, labour and hospitality coexist, for now. The resilient power of imagination remains the strongest defiant force against exploitation.

Loren Kronemyer
Curator STOP WORK





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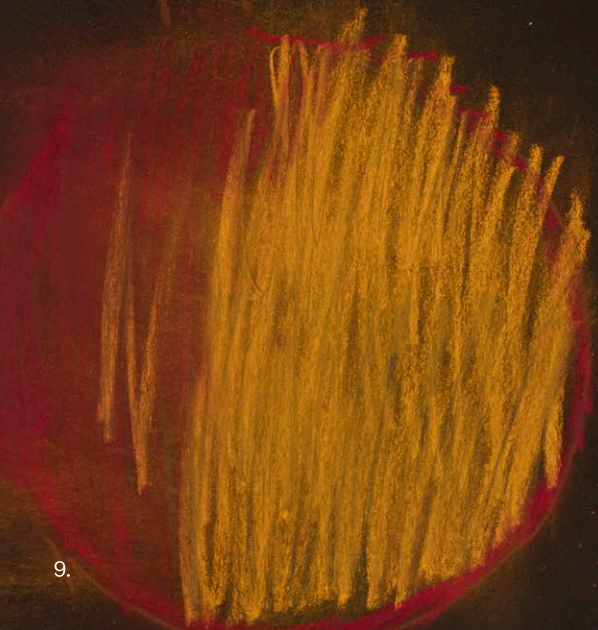
7.



8.



Bon Jovi
Bad medicine.
99 in the shade.



Bon Jovi

Blaze of
glory

You
Really
got
me
now





10.



11.

LIST OF WORKS

¹¹ Michael Candy, *Chair*, 2010, Recycled timber and metal, electronics, 50 x 50 x 100 cm, (catalogue image)

⁴ Nicholas Capaldo, *Untitled*, 2017, oil pastel, pencil, 20.5 x 56.5 cm, (catalogue image)

⁷ Samraing Chea, *Every Truckers Enjoy Having Barbecue to Eat for Picnic. Where They Sit Outside Near the Truck Stop During Recreation*, 2018, graphite, coloured pencil, 28 x 38 cm (catalogue image)

David Fitzpatrick, *Mother's Day*, 2025, Found object on copper, finished with brass, tin acids, iron and copper oxides, and shellac, 55.5 x 59 cm

⁶ David Fitzpatrick, *If It Fitz*, 2025, Found object on copper, finished with brass, tin acids, iron and copper oxides, and shellac, 46 x 55 cm (catalogue image)

David Fitzpatrick, *Worked Shirt*, 2025, Found object on copper, finished with brass, tin acids, iron and copper oxides, and shellac, 41 x 5 cm

Martin Forster, *Pepsi Max Coke*, 2018, pencil, 15 x 38.5 cm

Martin Forster, *Maxi Coke*, 2018, pencil, 15 x 38.5 cm

Martin Forster, *Pepsi Max and Coke*, 2018, greylead pencil, pencil. 15 x 38.5 cm

Martin Forster, *Maxi Pepsi Coke*, 2017, pencil, 15.5 x 38 cm

Martin Forster, *Coke*, 2018, pencil, 18.5 x 38 cm

Martin Forster, *Pepsi Max*, 2018, pencil, 17 x 38.5 cm (cover image)

Martin Forster, *Coke Max Pepsi*, 2018, pencil, 16 x 38.5 cm

² Lychandra Gieseeman, *Centrefolds*, 2024, sublimation dye printed on aluminium, 98 x 30 x 27 cm (catalogue image)

¹ Pascale Giorgi, *Mephistophelux Red Light Therapy Mask*, 2025, plaster, paint, led lights, power supply, elastic, plastic clip, 25cm x 15cm x 10 cm (catalogue image)

⁹ Cameron Gresswell, *Untitled*, 2019, pastel, 50 x 70 cm (catalogue image)

Cameron Gresswell, *The Last Three Letters*, 2019, ball point pen, greylead pencil, pastel, 49.5 x 70 cm

Cameron Gresswell, *Untitled*, 2021, pastel, 47.5 x 67.5 cm

Cameron Gresswell, *USA Singer Meatloaf*, 2023, acrylic, paint pen, 38 x 56 cm

Cameron Gresswell, *Coldhouse Oz Group Called Icehouse*, 2022, ball point pen, pencil, pastel, 38 x 56 cm

Christian Hansen, *Untitled*, 2020, greylead pencil, pencil, 28 x 38 cm

⁸ Christian Hansen, *Just a Rest*, 2024, oil paint, 60 x 106.5 cm (catalogue image)

Christian Hansen, *Last One*, 2024, oil paint, 76 x 102 cm

¹⁰ Rakhi James, *Untitled*, 2018, ink, watercolour, 28.5 x 38 cm (catalogue image)

Adrian Lazzaro, *Robot*, 2022, marker, paint pen, 24.5 x 35.5 cm,

³ Adrian Lazzaro, *Self Portrait*, 2021, marker, paint pen, 38 x 28 cm, (catalogue image)

⁵ Cathy Staughton, *God Death Sky Day Dog Robot Angel Bed*, 2022, acrylic, 76 x 56 cm (catalogue image)



OPENING HOURS
Wed – Fri 11am – 5pm
Sat 12 – 4pm
or by appointment

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