

From the Editor

by Claire Ruud



Alejandro Cesarco
The Two Stories
2009

Still from a 16 mm film transferred to video
Courtesy Murray Guy, New York and the artist

A conversation about art and economy may easily descend into a list of shortages (shortages in government funding, philanthropy, collectors, galleries, studio spaces) and, in response, a celebration of certain types of abdication from the system (the DIY, the temporary, the collective). Rightly, we perceive dysfunction in commercial and capitalist models. However, out of frustration, it's tempting to complain about the systems too much and examine our own responses too little.

The question begs to be asked: what is your personal economy?

This is one of the questions raised in ***Art Work: A National Conversation about Art, Labor, and Economics***, a newspaper and website recently released by the Chicago-based collective Temporary Services. In a series of articles entitled "Personal Economies," anonymous artists write about the way they make ends meet. These stories begin to uncover the many ways that artists support themselves: day jobs, the use of office resources and time to work on personal projects, teaching, freelance work, barter, fundraising and grant-writing. They forgo health insurance, they receive stipends from their parents and they depend on cheap rent. These are the practicalities of our lives.

At the Austin release of Art Work, Kate Watson and I invited a number of artists and art professionals to talk about their personal economies in terms of their art practices. Sean Gaulager supports [Co-Lab](#), his experimental exhibition space, through odd jobs as an art installer and house painter, among other things. Katie Geha supports [SOFA](#), her apartment gallery, by keeping expenses low (\$50 per exhibition). She's a graduate student, so fellowships, teaching assistantships and student loans are probably part of this economy. Russell Etchen keeps the doors of [Domy Books](#) open by stocking Dunnys and other trendy, collectible toys. Artist Jenny Hart started her own business, [Sublime Stitching](#). The business is based on her artistic skill set—she designs hipster embroidery patterns—but she keeps it completely separate from her artistic practice. Each of these artists and art professionals has established a different relationship between art practice and economic practice.

Another question follows upon the heels of the first: how does your personal economy coincide with your art practice?

This question must precede the questions we ask of the larger economic systems within the art world. Otherwise, we risk complacency. We can only start from where we are.

Check out this issue, and next time, look forward to reviews of *Desire* at the Blanton, Christine Gray at Okay Mountain and Margarita Cabrera at Box 13.

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