

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - NOVEMBER 14, 2014

SERIES: *Factory*; **PROGRAM:** *Showroom*; **TITLE:** *Idleness*

DATES: November 25, 2014 - January 17, 2015 (please check calendar for Holiday closures)

OPENING RECEPTION: Monday, November 24, 5:00–8:00pm

PRESS PREVIEW: Monday, November 24, 4:00pm

LOCATION: Jacob Lawrence Gallery, Art Building, University of Washington, Seattle

HOURS: Tuesday-Friday, 10:00am–5:00pm; Saturday, noon–4:00pm

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Factory Showroom: *Idleness* opening at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery

Laziness is the absence of movement and thought, dumb time - total amnesia. It is also indifference, staring at nothing, non-activity, impotence. It is sheer stupidity, a time of pain, futile concentration. Those virtues of laziness are important factors in art. Knowing about laziness is not enough, it must be practiced and perfected. – Mladen Stilinović, “Praise of Laziness,” 1993

Work is a shame. – Vlado Martek

The aperture on the camera Man Ray used for “Dust Breeding” (1920) is said to have been left open the precise amount of time it took him and Marcel Duchamp to have a leisurely lunch. The resulting photograph—capturing a section of Duchamp’s “Large Glass” (1915-1923) lying in an unfinished state and gathering dust—is the index for *Idleness*, a new exhibition opening at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery on November 24, 2014. *Idleness* is the second *Showroom* program as part of *Factory*—a series of displays, labor demonstrations, motivational speeches, quality controls, and new product launches exploring the question, “Is a school a factory?” The dialectical counterpoint to *Industry*—the first exhibition in the series, which celebrated traditional, industrious studio practices, and notions of labor from Auguste Rodin to El Anatsui—*Idleness* presents artists who locate the virtues of their practice in moments of pause, idleness, daydreaming, non-studio-time, convalescence, or spending time with friends.

With Art and Calls for Indolence by:

Gretchen Bennett, Matt Browning, Tacita Dean, Claire Fontaine, Marcel Duchamp, Ripple Fang, Anne Fenton, Tom Marioni, Man Ray, Bertrand Russell, Edwin Shoemaker, Nicholas Bower Simpson, Mladen Stilinović, Michael Van Horn, Andy Warhol, and others.

A Brief Overview of Works and Ideas in the Exhibition:

If Man Ray and Duchamp’s “Dust Breeding” is the artistic lodestar, Bertrand Russell’s “In Praise of Idleness” (1932) is the socio-economic touchstone also included in the exhibition. In this essay, Russell argued for a four-hour workday, and he praised leisure time and idleness as the highest aspirations for any advanced society. Around this same time, a Michigan farmer-turned-furniture-designer, Edwin Shoemaker, was putting the finishing touches on his masterpiece, the La-Z-Boy reclining chair, a modern example of which will be made available for use during the show. Extending Russell’s arguments as well as the imperatives of the La-Z-Boy, some sixty years later a Croatian conceptual artist Mladen Stilinović penned “Praise of Laziness” (1993) in the wake of the 1989 Revolution in Eastern Europe and the Fall of Communism. A founding member of the neo-avant-garde Group of Six, Stilinović will also be represented by an earlier piece, “Artist at Work” (1978), a series of self-portraits taken while he was asleep. In the mid-1960s, Andy Warhol planned to make a 24-hour film of Marcel Duchamp, including extended footage of the artist napping or asleep; while that project never materialized, Duchamp is in the exhibition as idle subject—in Warhol’s 20-minute film, “Screen Test for Marcel Duchamp” (1966)—appropriately doing nothing but smoking a cigar.

The night before an opening at the Oakland Art Museum, California conceptualist Tom Marioni invited fifteen of his closest friends to join him in one of the galleries for a performance, “The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art” (1970), another key historical work represented in this exhibition. Forty years later, Seattle artist Matt Browning super-heated his backyard fire pit to make “Glass” (2010), a sculpture consisting of the beer bottles he and his friends emptied on evenings spent around that same social space—a space the artist considered an extension of his studio, no matter the nature of the activity. Browning also considers some of his carved works to have an “idle mode”—a presentation manner that questions what an artwork is or does when it is not on full display similar to questions raised by Duchamp’s “Dust Breeding.” Anne Fenton quit making art on the art world’s terms in 2009. Since then, Fenton has established a social-centric practice that eschews traditional studio hours in favor of spending time and making work with friends and loved ones. *Idleness* will feature “Untitled (thumb vid)” (2014), a work made in the spirit of the great Light and Space artists but achieved with the most meager of means.

For a recent museum exhibition, Seattle artist Michael Van Horn was asked to make an archive of his contribution and impressive history as Photo Technician at the UW School of Art + Art History + Design. The resulting “Untitled” (2013), a photograph originally shown as a folded map, depicts a wall in Van Horn’s office festooned with Post-it notes saying, “Back at 2:00,” or “Out to Lunch,” or “MVH Running late,” that serve as both records of not-working (absence/unavailability) and generous promises that he will get back to it (presence/availability). When Seattle artist Gretchen Bennett broke her ankle jumping between rocks on a beach, her first thought was “lucky,” recognizing instantly that this might afford her a much-needed “break” from the obligations of the art world’s 21st-century intensity. Unable to conduct her normal studio practice, travel, or attend openings, her convalescence shifted the nature, tenor, and manner of producing of her work. The exhibition will include Bennett’s diary pages from this time, as well as a small self portrait drawn at the zenith of her forced—though welcomed—indolence. With a nod to both Duchamp’s and Tacita Dean’s work about green rays—optical phenomena that occur at sunset or sunrise—a video by recent UW graduate Ripple Fang, “Most Beautiful Bright Green” (2013) is a static shot of the artist lounging in an easy chair watching TV; her diaristic reflections on being idle and seeking inspiration as read by a fully-detached computer voice provide the soundtrack.

Testing aesthetic convention and revealing the curator’s lazy, Google-based, and friend-recommended research strategy, *Idleness* also asks, “Is this an exhibition or a sluggard’s enchiridion?” with the inclusion of a number of art-adjacent texts and broadsides, such as an e-flux post about Tacita Dean’s workshop, “Comoggardising: the benefits of creative indolence,” held this summer at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in which the artist warned participants, “The level of brain idleness I want to encourage is very rigorous indeed and difficult to achieve,” or the press release for “Today I Made Nothing,” an exhibition organized by artist and curator Tim Saltarelli for Elizabeth Dee Gallery that posited, “With times of production and research (or conception), becoming increasingly indistinguishable, the culture worker is often working when it might appear otherwise, even when at a casual lunch meeting or exhibition opening.” In that same spirit, Seattle architect Nicholas Bower Simpson has been commissioned to design and build an outdoor deck for the Jacob Lawrence Gallery so that laziness could be practiced and perfected in the future. At the time of this press release, and to borrow a phrase from Duchamp, the deck remains “definitively unfinished.”

Funding for *Idleness* is provided by The Friends of Jacob Lawrence Gallery and the Nebula Project.

Image Captions:

Mladen Stilinović, *Artist at Work*, 1977. Photograph from a series. Courtesy of the artist

Tom Marioni, *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art*, 1970 - present, 1979 installation view at SFMOMA; photo: Paul Hoffman



ONGOING PROGRAM:

FACTORY PICNIC - Every Wednesday at Noon

Join Scott Lawrimore, Director of the Jacob Lawrence Gallery, for *Factory Picnic*—a lively, informal, research and development group exploring the issues raised by *Factory* programs and exhibitions. Formal readings, special presentations, screenings, and activities allow students, faculty, staff, and members of the community to share and discuss ideas about labor, leisure, education, and art production. For *Idleness*, the picnic table Lawrimore uses as a desk in his office will be moved into the exhibition space to replace the Gallery's reception desk.

This event is free (BYOBB - bring your own brown bag), open to the public, and happens every Wednesday at noon. Check the calendar around the holidays for special days and times.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

January 20 - 31:

Factory Showroom: *Daily Labor Demonstrations and Motivational Speeches*

Artists and activities to be announced soon.

February 3 - 28:

Factory Showroom: *The Way Black Machine, a project by HOWDOYOUSAYYAMINAFRICAN?*

The Jacob Lawrence Gallery is pleased to announce a new initiative to dedicate every February to artists and ideas relating to the African diaspora in honor of the gallery's namesake and Black History Month.

We are thrilled to inaugurate this new program with a special project by the YAMS Collective.

HOWDOYOUSAYYAMINAFRICAN? is "a collective of artists, writers, composers, academics, filmmakers and performers from around the world who collaborate across disciplines and cities." For the Jacob Lawrence Gallery, YAMS has designed a fully-immersive, multi-media installation of "The Way Black Machine," (2014) an internet archive of activism around black embodiment to address "contemporary conditions such as police brutality, American-funded international violence, and the ways that memes and hashtags collapse and make legible such threats to personhood."

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