

In its totality, capitalism can neither be photographed, sculpted, painted nor filmed. The irrepresentability of this system's contemporary, digital form enhances its obscurity and scale, with only the tangible consequences of its abstract power being clearly seen and felt. Further complicating the challenge of its visual representation in art, is capitalism's ability to evade detection and safeguard its continuation. In Gilles Deleuze's *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992), the philosopher posits how capitalist power operates as flexible networks in which individuals are quantified, tracked, conditioned and controlled. "Controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other," argues Deleuze, today's societies of control are caught in dynamic and systemic webs spun by "a mutation of capitalism" and its current digital organization.

Representing this problem aesthetically, however, becomes the object of investigation for artists like Rosanna Marie Pondorf. She endeavors to solidify the nebulous power of capitalism's larger network-based system through artistic objects and cultural projects. Rather than seeking to visually represent Capitalism in its totality, the premise of her artistic practice focuses on disentangling the systemic nodes of money, media, and porn. Examining how these specific points of contact to capitalism's monumental network find new configurations, Pondorf's practice builds a concrete picture of social relations determined by the pleasure of consumption. As an aesthetic response to Deleuze's call for "forms of resistance against the society of control," Pondorf thinks through his socio-technological paradigm to isolate the neoliberal logic that mediates capital, sexual labor and mass media within the digital age.

Her aesthetic forms of resistance give shape to sculptures like *PREMIUMFLEX* (2021). Internet pornography's circulation via platform economies was well established in the 2000s. These new business models capitalize on visual representations of sex work and sexual labor, as consumers easily access digital pornographic media through glossy iPhone and laptop screens. With reference to the tile format of Pornhub's video previews, Pondorf sandwiches tile adhesive between a trowel and the back of *PREMIUMFLEX*'s marble surface on which screenshots from one of the world's most-trafficked adult websites acquires tangible depth. The laser-engraved screenshots document a week's worth of Pornhub's top-streamed videos in 2021, archiving this information in stone. The screens from which these videos were consumed for sexual pleasure are replaced with marble, an expensive and classical material, traditionally reserved for recording historical events or commemorating people with power.

However, the humble trowel stands in opposition to the marble's elevated material status. This tool is normally used in construction for spreading building materials like cement or plaster. Pondorf employs its association to blue-collar, manual labor as a means of establishing a critical connection to porn as the commodification of sex. Pornhub's post-Fordian consumption model based on surveilling patterns in consumer choices, like the most-watched porn genres, infect the labor users will see performed in pornographic media productions. "In the industry of the spectacle as it is in the sex industry," argues the philosopher and queer theorist Paul B. Preciado, "the process of the pornification of labor extracts a pharmacopornographic surplus value from racialized and pauperized bodies." He conceptualizes the pharmaceutical and porn industries as a pharmacopornographic-industrial complex to trouble the economy reinforcing dominating norms related to sex and sexuality. Influenced by Preciado's ideas and within the scope of

2021's top-streamed porn genres from 'hentai' to 'Ebony,' Pondorf sets this media's consumption in stone to question a business based on a collective sense of apathy towards the labor of used and sexualized bodies for instant gratification.

Instead of the statistics of users' porn consumption, Pondorf plays with the power dynamics between materials like latex and money in relation to the sexual practice of BDSM (bondage, discipline, dominance and submission, sadomasochism) in her sculpture *Bonding Values II* (2022). Glued together with a sugary paste and compressed under 100 tons of pressure, a block of shredded devalued Euro banknotes is pinned by a harness of stretched black latex against a wall. The latex's elastic limit is determined by the mass of compressed paper-money. If the restraints are stretched too far, the sugary block of money could crumble and break. This state of tension hints at the instability of the financial system within the changing network of geopolitical precarity. As a solid block that is also treacherously fragile, *Bonding Values II* questions financial insecurity through its material use of devalued Euro bills which Pondorf shreds into glittery paper confetti held together by sugar. She also frames wealth as the conditioning factor of labor as (in)voluntary servitude under capitalism to imbue bondage with a representative function. Whether a voluntary activity for erotic pleasure or an involuntary subjugation, bondage allegorizes how social relations are bound by capital.

When Pondorf's use of capital intervenes in the conditions of artistic production and display, her artistic practice also opens a discourse on how cultural work is bound by capital. To fund the award-winning Rosa Stern Space, a non-commercial exhibition room that she cofounded in 2017, Pondorf counts on public grants, donations and the collective effort of a team of artists and cultural workers who collaboratively run the space. In 2022, it developed into a non-profit organization that facilitates artistic production, exhibitions and intercultural exchange between local and international artists speculating about the present as well as near and distant socio-technological futures. As an artistic network of refuge and support, Rosa Stern Space resists the reproduction of power structures inherent in Munich's art scene. Its cultural and curatorial program stimulate infrastructural and institutional diversity within the city's complex of traditional museums and private galleries. Pondorf's artistic practice not only makes power structures visible, but also envisions Rosa Stern Space as an autonomous platform and counter-network of shared ideas and positions that act in solidarity against the art system's market-orientated hegemony. As another facet to her practice, it emphasizes how Pondorf does not seek to visualize capitalism's totality. Rather, she localizes specific nodes and links within its network as they shift, "like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point."

Whether her aesthetic forms of resistance take the shape of objects or projects, through Pondorf's artistic practice of making and doing, dots of the capitalist network are connected and brought into critical view. Her latex-bound cash, porno-marble screenshots, and sugarcoated Euro bills connect the systemic links between money, media and porn's networked-based power. These connections are crucial for confronting a system that replicates itself within the art system as well. The media politics of Pondorf's art and her aesthetic strategies are the first line of defense against making these mechanisms of control and capitalism's invisible hand visible.

1 Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," October 59 (Winter 1992): 4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/778828>.

2 Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 6.

3 Ibid, 7.

4 Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2008), 286.

5 "Insights: 2021 Year in Review," Pornhub, accessed January 18, 2023, <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/yir-2021>.

6 Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 4.

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