

T J Watson 15.12.2016

Who, if anyone, will supersede the United States of America as hegemon of the interstate capitalist system? How will the world's most powerful nations reconcile the requirements of profit and growth, on the one hand, and their citizens' demands for democratic participation, on the other? When will the finitude of the world's resources and the instability produced by climate change render the obligation for continual economic growth unfeasible? Will innovations in environmental technologies stymie capitalist growth or bestow industry with improved conditions of profitability? How will calls for sovereignty and national identity be resolved with increasing transnational flows of goods and services? Will the increased demands and militancy of the Chinese working class challenge the working conditions that have thus far bolstered global growth rates? How will rising dissatisfaction with tax avoidance be reconciled with reliance on financialized corporations whose obligations to shareholders remain to minimize tax expenditure? How will workers positioned at the bottom of global supply chains respond to their continued maltreatment, and how will their dissatisfaction be reconciled with the economies? How will popular demands for full employment be reconciled with the capitalist desideratum of a mobile workforce, vulnerable to their future financial obligations? How will the short-term demands of shareholders be reconciled with the long-term requirement to reproduce a regular supply of labour power? Will the US dollar relinquish its status as international reserve currency? Will economic crises? Will sharpening inequalities give rise to political movements that intensify the struggle for the intensification of the struggle for the grant concessions to the property be

The camouflage white gallery desk and its attendant A4 press release constitute rarely discussed ubiquties of contemporary commercial art. Upon entry to the private gallery, spectators customarily visit such desks to obtain a list of works and press release; the information detailed is often thought vital to enlightened interpretation. Whether through habit or choice, this process itself is seldom considered relevant to discussion of a work, with the forms and relations there bestowed neatly and commonsensically distinguished from any task of artistic understanding. Thus, the demands placed on the gallery desk—necessarily assumed by both viewer and seller of art—have historically been for discretion and invisibility. A table and press release ought not to announce themselves lest they wish to announce the site of relation, or non-relation, between art and its contingent non-art practices.

Accordingly, there are only subtle variations between private gallery desks: typically, more financially successful galleries construct desks from plastic, while fledgling commercial galleries opt for wood, with MDF a common choice. To the uninterested eye, most appear alike: white, geometric and approximately four feet tall (a size both standard for the width of sheet material and sufficient to obscure a person seated). Disguised behind sit employees of the gallery, engaged in administrative labour, undertaking the logistics required of exhibition and commerce.

The furniture's obfuscations and art world ordinariness have traditionally been prerequisites for the autonomy of work displayed. The desk and press release occupy a position constructed between singularity, or exceptionality, and doxa. Together, the two are curious pieces of ritualised non-art that, like the commodity form, pervade the reception of art without announcing their intrusions. The spatiality of the two, though, remains differently received: the desk is commonly posited in measurable, architectural space, while the press release, as text, is received in a monadic, self-contained space.

Viewers acquainted with London's commercial galleries will recognise aspects of the works enclosed. The works proffer attempted facsimiles of the front of three blue-chip gallery desks, those of Hauser and Wirth, Savile Row; Sadie Coles, Kingly Street; and Marian Goodman, Lower John Street. Made as facades, the objects have been further trimmed down to a near uniform length of roughly 150cm, on top of which sit 30 copies of an A4 text, formatted in accordance with each gallery's preferred document layout. The text, in place of a press release, is my own.

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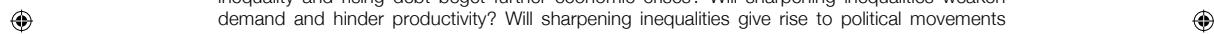




Back



Who, if anyone, will supersede the United States of America as hegemon of the interstate capitalist system? How will the world's most powerful nations reconcile the requirements of profit and growth, on the one hand, and their citizens' demands for democratic participation, on the other? When will the finitude of the world's resources and the instability produced by climate change render the obligation for continual economic growth unfeasible? Will innovations in environmental technologies stymie capitalist growth or bestow industry with improved conditions of profitability? How will calls for sovereignty and national identity be resolved with increasingly transnational flows of goods and services? Will the increased demands and militancy of the Chinese working class challenge the working conditions that have thus far bolstered global growth rates? How will rising dissatisfaction with tax avoidance be reconciled with reliance on financialized corporations whose obligations to shareholders remain to minimize tax expenditure? How will workers positioned at the bottom of global supply chains respond to their continued maltreatment, and how will their dissatisfaction be registered in core economies? How will popular demands for full employment be reconciled with the capitalist desideratum of a mobile workforce, vulnerable to the sanction of dismissal? When will states, governments, households and firms stop adding to their future financial obligations? How will the short-term demands of shareholder value be reconciled with the long-term requirement to reproduce a reliable and regular supply of labour power? When will the US dollar relinquish its status as international reserve currency, and what will replace it? Will declining growth, sharpening inequality and rising debt beget further economic crises? Will sharpening inequalities weaken demand and hinder productivity? Will sharpening inequalities give rise to political movements whose actions threaten the conditions for profitable capitalist enterprise? Will persistent low growth result in an intensification of the struggle for the world's resources, rendering the rich less willing to grant concessions to the poor? Will the shrinking costs of reproducing informational products significantly harm the profitability of capitalist enterprise? How will intellectual property be defended, and what will be its role in promoting or undermining market competition? When will the rising costs of input, labour and taxation render capitalist accumulation insufficiently profitable to continue? What form of action will elites undertake if capitalist production is deemed insufficiently profitable? Will the desires of financial elites to reclaim their debts shift greater investment away from productive enterprise? Will the value of real estate continue to rise in core economies, and what will be its political consequences? Will governments continue to see exchange rate manipulation and cheap credit as a means to boost demand and evade crises? Will rising interstate competition cause wealth disparities between core and periphery to rise or subside? Will the sustained expansion of the financial sector continue to have little impact on employment? Will the increased financialization of workers' revenue, evident in borrowing, pensions and money market funds, leave real wages stagnant? What will become of authoritarian capitalism in East Asia? Will emerging European nationalisms be a boon or hindrance to the ambitions of transnational finance capital? Will the advancing capitalisation of education, health and the environment be restrained so as to ensure the long-term profitability of capitalism? What hitherto uncommodified areas of social life will be rendered amenable to capitalist accumulation next?



**Untitled (Hauser and Wirth)**

Wood, paint, paper  
120 x 175 x 120cm  
2016



Front



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**Untitled (Sadie Coles)**

Wood, paint, paper  
120 x 160 x 110cm  
2016





Back



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**Untitled (Marian Goodman)**

Wood, Paint, Perspex, Paper  
120 x 160 x 110cm  
2016

