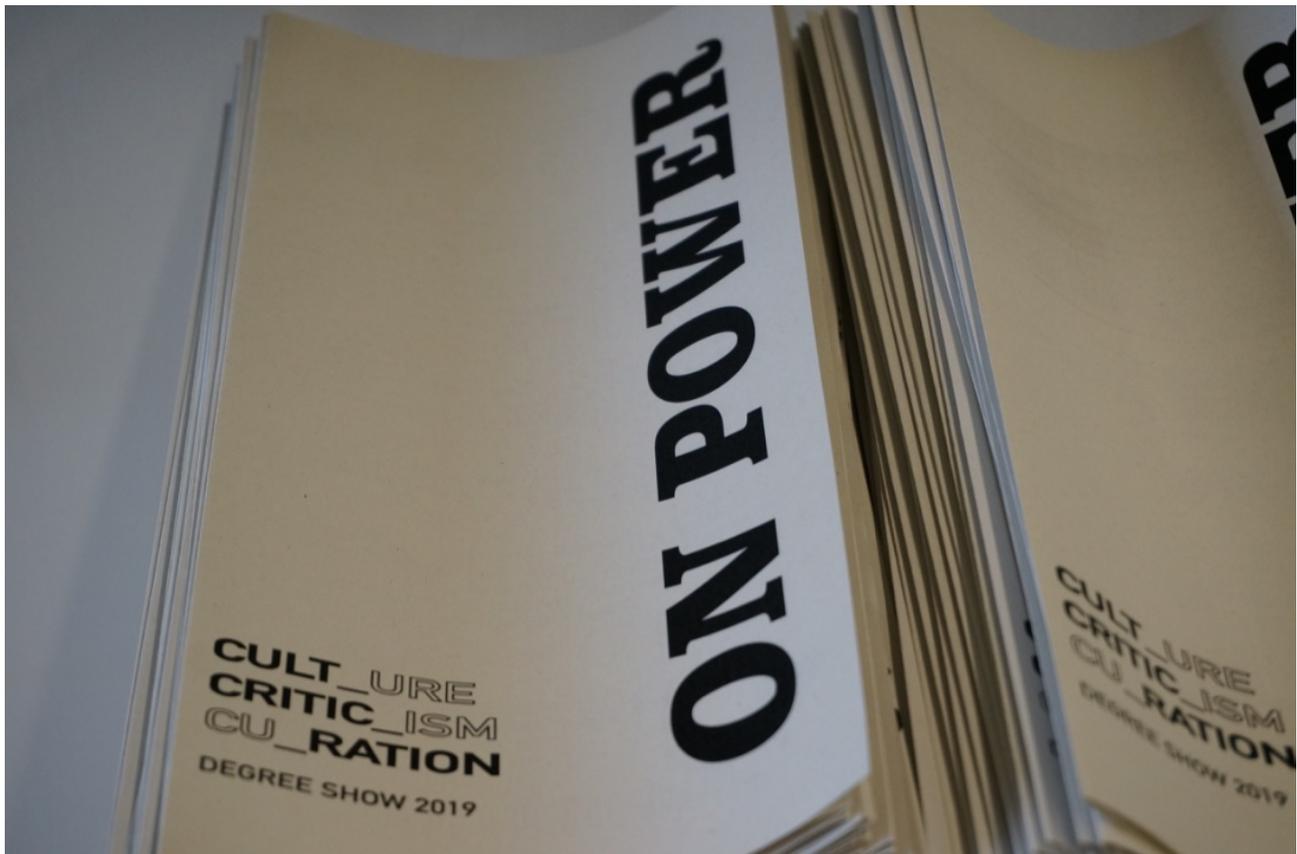


Precariously, We Walk

19 – 23 June 2019

Private View: 18 June, 6 – 9p



“Power is only power when addressed to individuals who are free to act in one way or another; it presupposes rather than annuls their capacity as agents”
- On Governmentality, Michel Foucault

Taking Foucault’s note on the art of governmentality as a point of departure, “Precariously, We Walk” explores the various facets of power that exist within the self and society. Practices of power are as old as history itself; propelled by our global capitalist society, they have become ever more deeply rooted in our personal lives, entertainment, news media, the internet, surveillance technologies, and types of identity documentation. The logic of human relations is based on power-over-others, so all freedom is enacted and regulated by some form of authority, including self-determination. This symbiotic relationship between power and freedom has been celebrated, mocked, and subverted by artists to construct meaning on the dynamics of the interpersonal domain. With the aim of enriching our understanding of modern power structures, this exhibition presents photography, sculpture and moving image on topics ranging from social control to citizenship.

By pointing us towards the construction of reality through mainstream and social media, Ben Yau’s *The Spectre Of A World Which Could Be Free* (2019) and Sabrina Scassa’s *Collapsed Identity Vol. I and Vol. II* (2019) scrutinize the utility of the look of freedom in identity politics. Emma King uses a modern information age perspective as a framework for discussing the relationship between political language and propaganda in her work *1984* (2019), which navigates seamlessly between pseudo-reality and reality. Also revealing in terms of non-neutral media mediation is Ren Zhong’s *Tank vs. Man* (2017), which deals the affective and social dimension of collective leadership: The world-famous image of a lone protestor blocking the way of tanks near Tiananmen Square in 1989 is translated into an interactive video game of choreographed resistance, creating a representation

of national identity and historical memory.

Accompanying these artistic explorations of global, pervasive forms of power are probes into the personal and seemingly innocuous. In response to the growing prevalence of direct and indirect surveillance, Bader Esbaitah's *The Panoptic Tunnel* (2019) and Imann Gaye's *Actions in Stillness* (2018) challenge our culture of 'observation' through notions of the surveyor and the surveyed. While Esbaitah presents the act of looking as a question of illusive interaction, Gaye believes it to be powered by perceptions and assumptions, hence why she uses stillness as a way to counter the vulnerability of those under watch. From a more personal viewpoint, Guy Ronen addresses ideational characteristics of the military in his work *Autobiography (Fixing The Noises)* (2019), which gives form to a 'messy' web of virtualized surveillance.

By approaching the interdependence of the self and society through different lenses of human, technical and hybrid control systems, the artists on show present multifaceted perspectives on our modern sensibilities of power and freedom. With this interdisciplinary approach, "Precariously, We Walk" aims to stimulate the discussion on (self-)governance, while hoping to expand our critical consciousness of the role of power in present-day society.