
You Are More Than Your Productivity

M-A Murphy

Abstract

During the last semester of my undergraduate degree, which took place on unceded Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories (Vancouver, BC), I felt like my entire life was serving tables, reading articles, and producing papers. Amidst all of this, I started drawing and making political stickers as a form of creative expression and praxis. One day, I decided to draw and digitize an image that challenged productivity and the ongoing academic and societal pressures I felt to keep producing. I was spending endless hours on my computer, researching and writing, while the rest of the time I was working. The pressures of capitalism and productivity were eating away at me. My shoulders were tight, my eyes were sore, and I began grinding my teeth at night (the dentist told me that the habit of grinding your teeth at night is increasing among younger populations). Since finishing my graduate degree, I am still grappling with the societal feelings and pressures I have to always be productive, but now within the job market. The global pandemic doesn't help. I am continually reminding myself to slow down and be present within my community — as well as help to create communities of care - but it is very challenging, particularly in a neoliberal university environment and a capitalist society. The below image is one of the political stickers I made while trying to tackle and move through this challenge.

Keywords

art, drawing, productivity, neoliberalism



Author biography

M-A Murphy (she/her/they) is a second-generation Irish settler who recently graduated with a Master of Arts from the Gender and Social Justice program at the University of Alberta in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) on traditional Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Saulteaux, and Métis Nation territory. Before this, she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Studies with a minor in First Nations and Indigenous Studies on unceded Coast Salish Territories at University of British Columbia. Her interests include settler responsibility, Indigenous-settler relations, memory studies, transformative justice, and intersectional feminist art as praxis, to name a few. She loves building community, writing poetry, being gentle, and challenging dominant power structures.