

Press Release

# ***Fitter, Happier, More Productive***

Curated by **Lexington Davis**

On view:

**September 8 - October 21, 2023**

**Tues. - Sat., 11am - 6pm**

Opening Reception: **September 8, 6 - 8pm EST**

Location:

**291 Church Street, NYC, and 3D Online**

Featuring work by:

**Kate Cooper - Patricia Domínguez - Ilana Harris-Babou - Maryam Jafri - Shana Moulton & Nick Hallett**

Barre classes. Juice cleanses. Meditation apps. Ten-step skincare routines. Athleisure. Mindfulness training. Collagen peptides. Jade rolling. The “self-care” industry ceaselessly introduces trends aimed at improving physical and mental wellbeing, at least for those who can afford the hefty price tag. Such commodities and services are sold as a pathway to personal optimization, evading the question: for what purpose and whose benefit?

*Fitter, Happier, More Productive* brings together six artists whose work explores the toxic underbelly of capitalist wellness culture. The exhibition problematizes capitalism’s framing of wellness as a personal quest for self-improvement rather than a collective project requiring societal investment and systemic change. Instead of offering opportunities for reflection and renewal, wellness culture conditions us to see life as another mode of work, and work as the defining feature of life. By marketing self-care as an individualistic endeavor, capitalism gaslights the public into believing that issues created by corporate greed and a gutted welfare state might be solved by an açai bowl, a yoga retreat, or twenty-five units of Botox.

In contrast, the exhibition’s artists propose understandings of wellbeing that confront socio-political histories, environmental degradation, and structural inequalities. By examining the social, political, and psychological effects of wellness culture, the exhibition reveals the need for new practices of wellbeing inspired by activists like the Combahee River Collective and Audre Lorde, who saw self-care as a radical “act of political warfare.” Through engagement with overlooked histories and social conditions, *Fitter, Happier, More Productive* highlights how wellness practices might be transformed from capitalist labor into tools of resistance.

*Fitter, Happier, More Productive* Is an apexart NYC Open Call Exhibition. For more information on the exhibition and related events, email visit [apexart.org/davis.php](http://apexart.org/davis.php) or email [ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org](mailto:ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org).

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**Lexington Davis** is a PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews, where her research explores 1970s feminist art and domestic labor politics. She has held curatorial positions at the New Museum, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her work has been supported by a Fulbright Fellowship, Harvard Radcliffe Institute, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, the Association for Art History, and the Netherlands Institute in Athens.

apexart’s program supporters past and present include the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Spencer Brownstone, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, Epstein Teicher Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbott Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Fifth Floor Foundation, The Puffin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and administered by LMCC, funds from NYSCA Electronic Media/Film in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, as well as the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature.

**#FitterHappierMoreProductive**

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Ilana Harris-Babou, still from *Decision Fatigue*, 2020. HD video. 8:33 min.