

Play your cards right (or how we never talk about money)

In the Melbourne art world, that 'homeless' look of a few years ago has seemingly been replaced by the gym-going-drunk-Mum and the Lumberjacktivist (part lumberjack, part Occupy bystander). I think the living-out-of-a-cardboard-box style was a bit more reflective of where artists are at - not homeless, but just surviving. Perhaps I'm wrong to look to fashion for clues of an attitudinal [shift](#), but I'm reminded of that old adage: "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have." Unlike any other corporatised system, you never want to look too coiffed or too tailored or expensively branded, and there is a curious silence about how to live. And by 'how to live', I mean how to pay for how you [live](#).

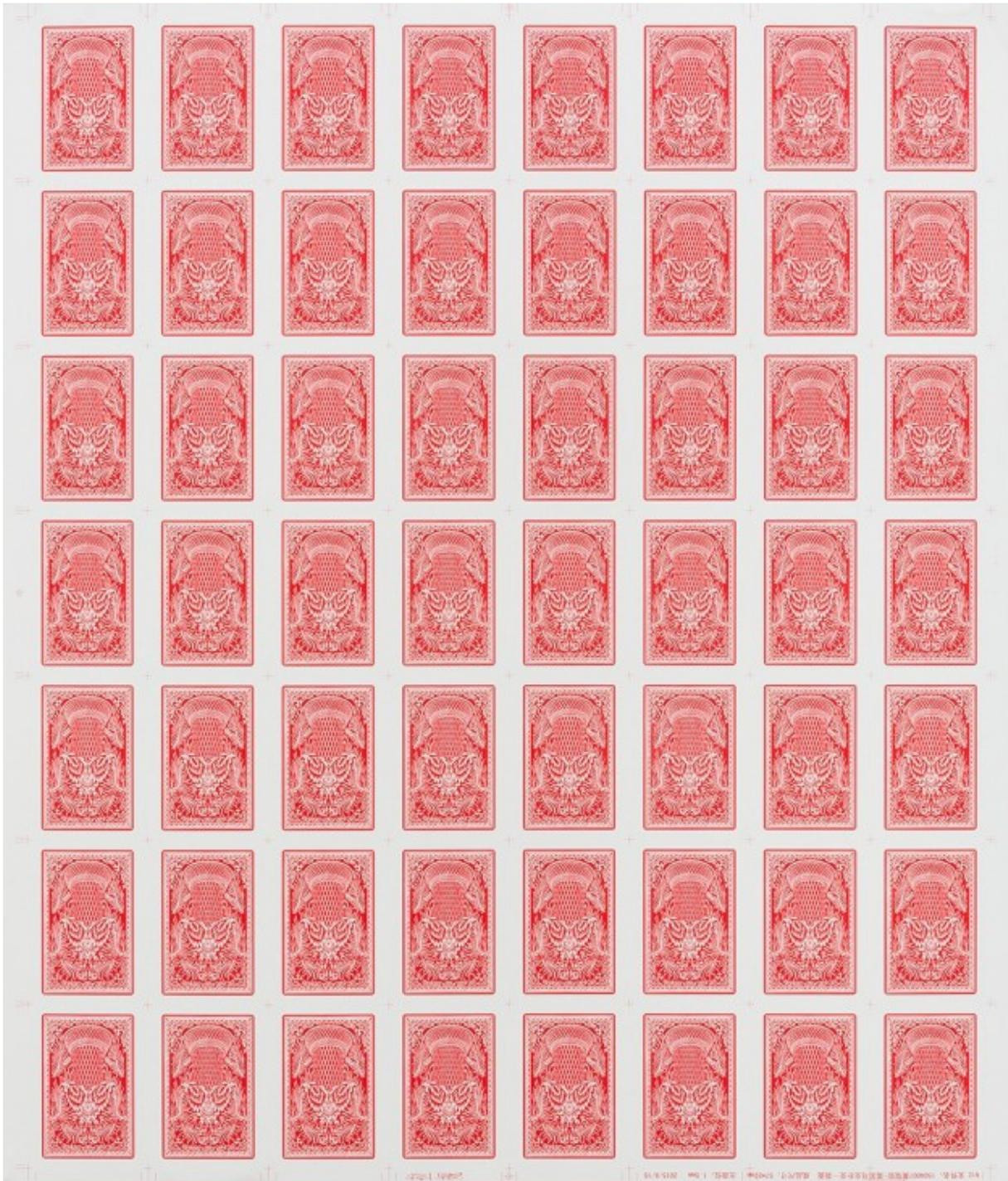
Lots of volunteering or working for beer; lots of awkward 'swaps' for artwork you still aren't sure about; lots of writing for 'experience', documenting shows for a pat on the back, or editing grant applications for an emoji. We are all good at not talking about money all the time. And there is a funny parity of excess - big ideas, big projects, big openings, big names, big font on big posters. We are play-acting at high-flying party mode a lot. And so when artists and curators come to visit, or when we make the move overseas, is it jealousy or plain old curiosity that makes us ask "How do you live over there?" Perhaps it's both.

In a [little known podcast](#) well known writer Ta-Nehisi Coates who wrote [this much read Atlantic piece](#) is interviewed by his oldest (and not at all famous) friend Neil Drumming. They talk about the difference between being a snob and being boushie. Touchingly they also discuss how Coates' money has changed the way he experiences the world, but not necessarily how he relates to it.

Mark Hilton, [Half Flush](#), Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, 14 November - 12 December 2015.

Mark Hilton, [website](#).

Jerry Saltz, '[Reject the Market. Embrace the Market. How I've found new magic amid all that money](#)', *New Yorker*, 22 April 2012, 42.



Mark Hilton, 'Half Flush', 2015, uncut printed playing cards, double-sided, edition of 10, 54.5 x 64.5 cm

