

Droste Effect

[Home](#) [Featured](#) [Current Issue](#) [Library](#) [Distribution](#) [Advertising](#) [About](#) [Collaborate](#) [Contact](#)

Movement Break: Adelita Husni-Bey investigates sport as a metaphor of life's endless performance



Adelita Husni-Bey, *After the Finish Line*, Movement Break, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. Photo by Jeff Warrin courtesy the artist, Laveronica arte contemporanea and Kadist Art Foundation.

Do Epic Shit. This statement was written on a huge black advertising board in downtown San Francisco last February. At a first sight it made me smile, then it started to make me think about the pressure to actually realize 'epic' things. Am I working enough to be remembered? Am I exercising enough to run a half marathon? Am I living an extraordinary life? Am I a hero?

In a city completely transformed by the recent tech boom, where it costs at least 2400 dollars per month for a decent accommodation, the wild competition invests every field of the human existence from the very basic rights, above all the right to housing. Always performing at their best allows people to live in such an amazing city. Until the pressure leads some of them to a complete burn out of both their body and mind.



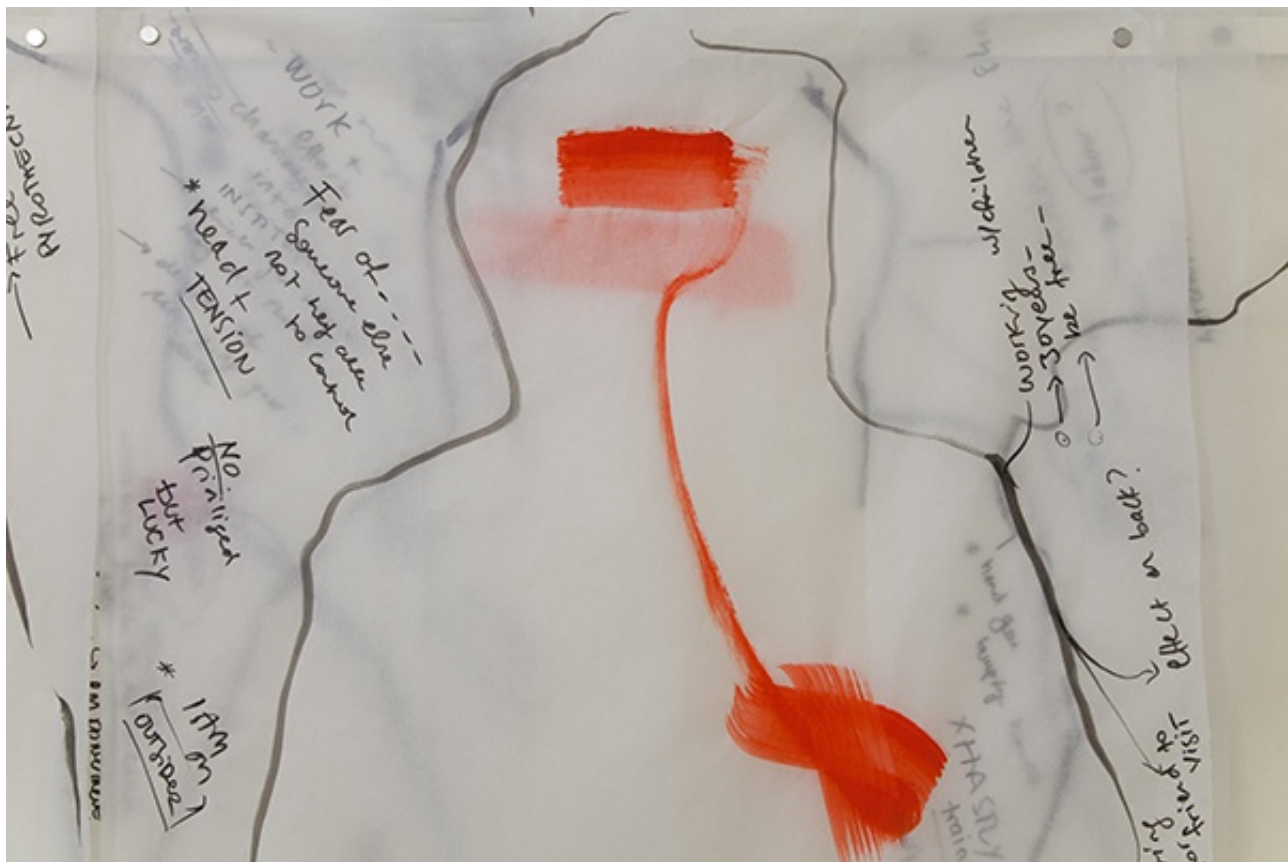
Adelita Husni-Bey, *After the Finish Line, Movement Break*, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. Photo by Jeff Warrin courtesy the artist, Laveronica arte contemporanea and Kadist Art Foundation.

Adelita Husni-Bey's solo exhibition *Movement Break* comprehends three different chapters of the same research. During her residency at Kadist Art Foundation, Adelita investigated the contemporary tendency to always perform in our capitalist society, where pain is de-politicized and people push their body to a literal breaking-point. Central to the exhibition is *After the Finish Line*, an experimental film, which sees the artist, through a radical pedagogical approach, discussing with a group of teenager athletes who experienced injuries during competitions. The film alternates two styles: one can be associated to some sport brand advertisement and the other one to a more documentaristic approach. Central to the film is the conversation between Adelita and the teenagers where they analyse the effect of pain, their consequent failure as athletes, and what it means for them to compete. Adelita pictures the athletes as perfect machines whose gestures are full of tension for the imminent performance, whose eyes are sharp and focused. Then, she shows how the teenagers, after experiencing a body defeat, go through a psychological breakdown as well. The artist's choice to use the sport context to explore the idea of success perfectly fits with what happens in big urban contexts such as San Francisco, for instance. Being an athlete is like being the perfect human being, and particularly in the American milieu, the athletic ideal is part of an imagery inevitably linked to success.



Adelita Husni-Bey, installation view, *Movement Break*, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. Photo by Jeff Warrin courtesy the artist, Laveronica arte contemporanea and Kadist Art Foundation.

Beside the film, the artist collaborated with a physical therapist to produce a series of sessions dedicated to the identification and acceptance of pain, visually supported by several silhouettes representing the participants' bodies. In this case, pain is not always connected to a sport injury, but it could be the result of a particular posture, which is held during work, or of an uncomfortable feeling, which causes a physical discomfort. Doing so, the artist identifies a group of bodies linked by a common condition, which de-constructs the individual subjectivity. The workshops perfectly examine the correlation between physical and psychological stress, which affect the state of the human body and mind as well.



Adelita Husni-Bey, installation view, *Movement Break*, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. Photo by Jeff Warrin courtesy the artist, Laveronica arte contemporanea and Kadist Art Foundation.

The exhibition is completed by *In the Cloud*, an unusual guide to research. The short publication consists of a dialogue between the artist and a cognitive behavioural psychologist, where they discuss Adelita's relationship with the stress caused by her art career. The text looks very honest and inspiring, it touches several common struggles, which people working in the art world normally experience, in a very sincere and intimate way. Adelita opens herself to the visitor, she is able to create a close relationship with the reader, and again tries to de-construct subjectivity in order to create a shared condition. Her pure honesty is something precious, it is rare in our performative, capitalist and neoliberal society to hear an artist say: "I am too interested in other people's voices. Maybe I'm too empathic. Does that even exist? I keep being more interested in other people's voices, and I feel like being an artist is kind of, also a really fascist position. You're like, listen to *me* this is what *I* have to say!"

Adelita Husni-Bey: *Movement Break*, [Kadist Art Foundation](https://www.kadist.org/), San Francisco from November 2nd to January 30th, 2016.



Adelita Husni-Bey, In the Cloud, Movement Break, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco. Photo by Jeff Warrin courtesy the artist, Laveronica arte contemporanea and Kadist Art Foundation.

Tag: drawing, film, installation, text
Artist: Adelita Husni-Bey
City: San Francisco
Venue: Kadist Art Foundation



LEAVE A REPLY

Name *(required)*

Mail *(required)*

Website

Your Comment *(required)*