

## Tapestries: Interwoven voices of local and global identities

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### Housewifization

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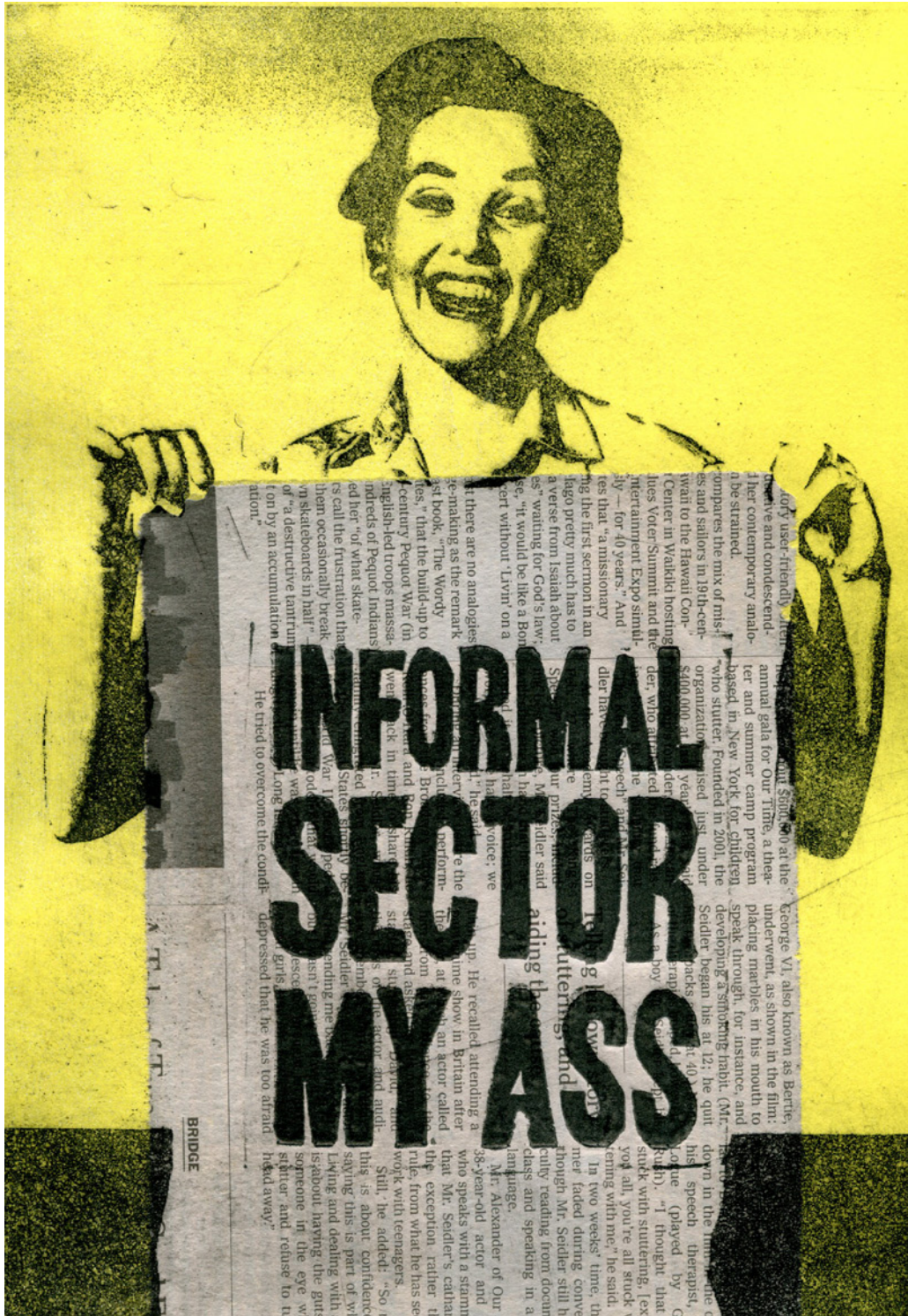
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# Housewifization

By Maya A. Weisinger



Etching + Chine-collé + Linoleum Print

# Housewifization

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## Artist Statement

Empowerment is the idea that there is a governing power that overlooks and surveys the common and mass population. It is under the assumption that this mass population cannot thrive independently of a greater, more singular power that gives meaning to “empowerment.” Empowerment is the essence of Western style and Western thought; to be empowered is to be able to live independently and freely, freedom being an important declaration of Western identity. The West distinguishes itself from non-West or “Other” spaces in the manner that the West provides its citizens with choices, freedom and the ability to invest in the capitalist market. From this desire and expression of freedom is formed an ideology of power. Because of historical events and discourses that have evolved and shaped the formation of the West, there has also evolved the concept of having equaling power. The West is seen as powerful because of its ability to thrive in the capitalist system and gain power through having. In this way, the West subjectifies groups and systems as “inferior” because of their lack of ability to fit into the formal economic system.

Empowerment can further mean to be able to distinguish societal and economic lines between human subjects. Empowerment can be bestowed upon those who are able to maintain a spot in the formal economy and afford to have this position supported by purchased care. The empowerment that lies in being able to further engage and develop within the formal economy with the proper care support in the domestic realm also applies to the idea of housewives and their role in the informal sector.

In the case of housewives, an entire economy is built upon the idea of free labor and care: the informal economy. Housewives do not get reimbursed for taking care of children, shopping, cleaning, cooking, etc. These are elements of support that are deemed necessary in order for the Male counterpart of the family unit to be able to work and provide for the family financially and to be able to develop in the formal economy, which is the ultimate definition of success in our society.

My image reflects the breaking of the social norms that are associated with the separation between the formal and informal economies. I wanted to portray an image that represents the stereotypical housewife: happy, upbeat, supportive, and warm. The message on the newspaper sheet she holds represents an affront to these ideas that are pushed on her by society. It is a statement that implies anger and bitterness to the complacency with our society as it is.