

The Main Event



June 27 - July 27, 2008
Opening Reception June 27, 6-8pm

Schroeder Romero Gallery
637 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001
T: 212 630 0722

Artwork By

Elaine Kaufman, Maria Dumlao & Jane Johnston, Alex Brown, Rob Carter, Institute for Aesthetics, Marisa Olson, Javier Piñon, Shannon Plumb, Justin Rancourt & Chuck Yatsuk, Fernando Sanchez, Tom Sanford, Jessica Tam, Lee Walton

Featuring

- Opening Reception Participatory Street Sporting Event by the Institute of Aesthetics
- 29th Anniversary Screening of Disco Demolition Documentary Film (July 12, 2008 6-8pm)
- Limited Edition Hyper Super Blooper Reel Commemorative DVD
- Exhibition Poster Catalog (Available at Schroeder Romero Gallery)
- Expanded archive of artworks, interviews and essays at www.themainevent.us

Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words, it is war minus the shooting...There cannot be much doubt that the whole thing is bound up with the rise of nationalism — that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige...There are quite enough real causes of trouble already, and we need not add to them by encouraging young men to kick each other on the shins amid the roars of infuriated spectators.

-George Orwell, *The Sporting Spirit*, 1945

On July 12, 1972 a Chicago radio disc jockey, strolled out to Comiskey Park's center field, dressed in Army fatigues. There, he gave a brief rallying declaration before detonating a box filled with thousands of disco vinyl records. The 50,000 fans in record attendance promptly stormed the field and began rioting. The fires, and destruction of the stadium was only quelled at the arrival of Chicago's riot squad.

Almost two thousand years earlier, Roman Emperor Commodus crafted his public image in the light of the warrior god Hercules, defeating all challengers in gladiatorial battles, through staged battles performed to reinforce his status as the protector of Rome, a god on earth.

This year we will experience two highly anticipated world events, the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing, and the U.S Presidential election. With each of these events we see athletics and games intertwined with issues of human rights, war, globalization, gender politics, fashion, and the environment. Professional sports embrace nationalistic fervor on all scales, while adopting metaphors of war and conquest and simultaneously operating as branded corporate entities. Similarly the lexicon of sports, the embrace of spectacle, the championing of team apparel and team (brand or party) identity manifest themselves in our politics, military and foreign policy.

The Main Event draws from across the spectrum of human competition searching for a degree of clouded understanding in the ways in which the spheres of sports, and athletics penetrate and intermingle with the larger world, brought together by competition of all sorts. Is the boxer different from the artist? Is the wrestler different from the politician? What do the Meadowlands share with Capitol Hill?

Elaine Kaufman, Maria Dumlao & Jane Johnston

In the absurdist video from their episodic collaboration *The Go Show*, these three artists lambast the "league" of galleries, and the competitive world of artist trading by making analogy to the selection of players in the NBA draft. The art world, like the world of professional sports is ruthless, and has proven to quickly turn it's back on those whose performance is not consistently up to par.

www.brainstormersreport.net

Alex Brown

Crafts intricate battle scenes based on historical, and imagined contests of human competition. Brown's armies highlight the absurdity and futility of war as well as our nostalgic romanticization of it. Drawn from video games and books, rather than the chaos of the embattled world at large, his figures appear almost figurines chaotically spilled across the global game board.

www.esopusmag.com/files/archive_flash/7/doingbattles

Rob Carter

His photographs address "...the conflicting relationships between architecture, sport, religion, class, and entertainment" that contemporary athletic stadiums serve to represent as iconographic

structures. In *Wrigley Castle*, Carter draws parallels between historical European fortresses and American baseball stadiums in order to reveal the power hierarchies of landscape domination, and community development surrounding these significant edifices. www.robcarter.net

Maria Dumlao

In her photograph *Interrogation Mark*, Maria Dumlao injects the space of the sports stadium with a sense of dread, drawing parallels between the way that war metaphors are used as rally cries in an athletic context, and perhaps recalling the history of the stadium as a primary site for death, and violence as entertainment. www.mariadumlao.com

Institute for Aesthetics

The Institute for Aesthetics is an organization dedicated to the playing of sports as performance. Aesthetics is a conscious acknowledgement of sport, especially contemporary spectator sports, as a mixture of physical activity, social interaction, performance, and ritual. Aesthetics aims to unleash the great opportunities inherent in competitive contests for social rather than monetary capital.

As part of *The Main Event*, the Institute for Aesthetics is organizing a participatory street sporting event during the opening reception. Bring your sneakers and some Powerade, and partake in an exciting new sport while dodging cars on 27th Street. Uniforms, equipment, and performance enhancing drugs provided. www.aesthetics.org

Marisa Olson

In a critical interpretation of political competition, Marisa Olson's video *96-00-04-08* presents the presidential elections of the last twelve years as a glorified version of the Coke vs. Pepsi taste test challenge. www.marisaolson.com

Javier Piñon

Using the classic Western ideologies of masculine heroism, Javier Piñon attacks, and undermines over a broad range of historical record, mashing through collage conflicting epochs of fantastical feats of Man over his adversaries, bringing to light the tenuous clarity of Good and Evil.

www.ziechersmith.com/a_pinon.html

Shannon Plumb

In her film *Olympics Track and Field 2005*, Shannon Plumb tells the story of a group of athletes jockeying for the gold, a slapstick 8mm dissection of the Olympics' ritualistic pomp, and competitive spirit that evokes both Charlie Chaplin, and *Triumph of the Will*. www.shannonplumb.com

Justin Rancourt & Chuck Yatsuk

With their sculptural installation *Bringing Down the Rim*, these two artists create an homage to one of the most arresting events in professional sports, the unexpected annihilation of the basketball goal, transforming the game's towering symbol of power into a fallen giant. www.vbpa.org

Fernando Sanchez

In his video, Sanchez presents the first play of Super Bowl XL1 as seen by nine different fans. The concurrent shifting of perspective whips the viewer into the thundering frenzy often experienced by the participant viewers of a large sporting event, from those watching at home, to those sitting in the stands. www.thankgodforconceptualart.com

Tom Sanford

Sanford's twelve portraits of disgraced sports stars speaks to the systematic abuse by public figures, such as professional athletes, as they take advantage of their privileged societal positions, enlarging their human flaws to god-like caricatures of our own shortcomings. www.leokoenig.com/artist/view/459

Jessica Tam

The figures in Jessica Tam's paintings are writhing monsters of flesh. Her pictures of professional wrestlers juxtapose the sport's inherent savagery with its distinctive theatricality. Despite the intensely vibrant hues of oil paint, *One Mask* lays out a wrestling mask resembling an executioner's hood, and *Ring Monsters* shows a frenetic interlocking of two sweat soaked men battling to death. Tam's images speak to the power of costume to transform an individual into an terrifying harbinger of pain. www.jessicajtam.com

Lee Walton

His Experiential models of performance based systems, has led him to collaborate with the curators of *The Main Event* in order to remotely create a perpetually changing floor sculpture that maps the results of six rounds of golf played over the duration of the exhibition. www.leewalton.com