



## de-sport: The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Sports through Art

2020.6.27 (Sat) -  
9.27 (Sun)

Exhibition Title	de-sport: The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Sports through Art
Period	Saturday, June 27 - Sunday, September 27, 2020 <small>*Originally scheduled to begin April 29, will now open on June 27 in order to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. The exhibition closing date will not be extended.</small>
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Galleries 1-6, 13
Closed	Mondays (open August 10), August 11, September 23 (Wed)
Admission	Adults: ¥1,200 (¥1,000) / Students: ¥800(¥600) 18 and under: ¥400 (¥300) / 65 and over: ¥1,000(¥1,000) <small>*prices in parentheses for advance sale(reserved) tickets. *Admission to this exhibition is restricted to time-entry tickets only. *Please purchase a ticket for the desired admission time slot in advance on the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa website. The tickets will be available from 10:00 June 19. <b>See page 6 for details.</b></small>
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
Sponsored by	Goldwin Inc./Neurtalworks
Cooperation	IO Data Device Inc.
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## About the Exhibition

In anticipation of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games next year, this exhibition sets out to reexamine the significance of sports from an artistic perspective. The title, *de-sport*, is a newly coined term derived from the medieval French word *desport*, meaning “to enjoy,” and the idea of dismantling and rebuilding sports, expressed by the phrase “deconstructed sport.”\* In tracing the etymology of the word “sport,” one finds that it originally meant “an enjoyable diversion from routine labor,” and included artistic pursuits such as music, theatre, painting, and dance. In contrast to contemporary sports – a parade of consummate physiques and skills, and a commodification of competition as entertainment – this exhibition returns to the roots of sports and adopts an artistic viewpoint in order to reconsider these activities as social constructs that reflect various issues of the day, including play, the body, the state, war, and non-verbal communication. Don’t miss this chance to watch and experience sports, deconstructed and reconstructed from the artistic perspectives of ten artists from nine countries around the globe.

\*The exhibition title was inspired by Eugene Kangawa’s solo exhibition “supervision / Desport.”

## Exhibition highlights

### A brilliant artistic contemplation of the meaning of sport

Whether mesmerized by the graceful movements of gymnasts or figure skaters, or excitedly critiquing the incredible ball-handling skills of footballers, most of us can find some art in sport, and view it as a kind of artistic expression. Casting our gaze back across the vast span of art history, moreover, we find artists inspired by various sporting disciplines to embark on pioneering acts of expression, from painting by boxing, to the use of a “Dear John” letter as shooting target. Now, ahead of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, we return to the sources of sport and art for an artistic take on sport as a social construct reflecting many of the challenges we face today around questions of the body, nation, war, and non-verbal communication.

### A suitably international pantheon of nine artists from nine countries

“de-sport” will feature sport-themed works by nine artists of nine different nationalities and various regional and cultural backgrounds, in an unprecedented exhibition of unique works that capture sport from highly original perspectives, including Christian JANKOWSKI’s *Heavy Weight History*, a much-talked-about highlight of the 2017 Yokohama Triennale; and *Track and Field* by Allora & Calzadilla, who have featured in numerous international exhibitions, including the 54th Venice Biennale.



Christian JANKOWSKI *Heavy Weight History* 2013  
photo: Szymon Rogynski  
Courtesy: the artist, Lisson Gallery



Allora & Calzadilla *Track and Field* 2011  
Video, Collection of the artist  
©Allora & Calzadilla photo: Andrew Bordwin

## The chance to watch and experience new sports created by artists

Visitors to the exhibition will have the opportunity to try out a novel sport developed from an artist's perspective, including Gabriel OROZCO's popular *Ping Pond Table* from the Museum's collection and watch photos of trying out Erwin WURM's *One Minute Sculptures*. What do artists see as sport? Come and find out for yourself!



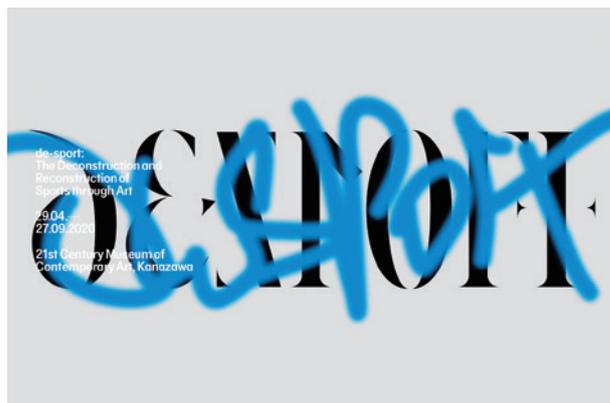
Gabriel OROZCO *Ping-Pond Table* 1998  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
©Gabriel OROZCO  
photo: KIOKU Keizo



Erwin WURM *One Minute Sculptures* 2014  
©Erwin WURM  
photo: Katrin Binner

## Intriguing and inventive design

The title "de-sport" is derived from the medieval French word *desport*, meaning "to enjoy," and the idea of dismantling and rebuilding sports, expressed by the phrase "deconstructed sport." A new font was also developed for the exhibition, and viewers are also encouraged to use this font, a contemporary reinterpretation of the physicality of script, to explore the meaning of sport as considered anew by the exhibition.



### Exhibited Artists

Allora & Calzadilla  
THE EUGENE Studio  
Charles FRÉGER  
Liam GILLICK  
Christian JANKOWSKI

Gabriel OROZCO  
Erwin WURM  
Xijing Men  
YANAI Shino  
KAZAMA Sachiko

Exhibition  
CompositionOrigins and Meanings of the Olympic  
Torch

In the Olympics of Ancient Greece, the Olympic flame symbolized the status of sport as an offering to the gods, and the dead. The torch relay of the modern Olympics was however invented, with the involvement of various artists, by the Nazis for propaganda purposes, to assert their claim as rightful heirs to European civilization. *Blue Passages* in which the artist takes an Olympic torch and retraces the route taken by philosopher Walter Benjamin during his flight from Nazi Germany, could be seen as rejecting such politicization of art and sport, and allowing the sacred flame to revert to its original meaning.

Artist: YANAI Shino

Gallery 1



YANAI Shino, *Blue Passages* 2016  
Collection of the artist  
©YANAI Shino

## The Exercising Nation-State

Since modern times, sports have taken on a role of moral education, fostering an environment where people gather into groups and respect a particular set of rules. Individuals train their bodies so as to perform in accordance to the rules of being part of a group, strengthening bonds within civil society and the nation-state. This also led to a shift towards a practical education that values the spirit of placing the team above the individual. This group-focused aspect of sports is particularly noticeable in global sporting events such as the Olympic Games. As with the national anthem and raising of the national flag, honor is placed not on the individual, but instead the nation. Here, we will rethink the relationship between the function of sports to governments and art, through the works of four artists.

Artist: Allora & Calzadilla, Charles FRÉGER, Christian JANKOWSKI

[Gallery 2]

Christian JANKOWSKI *Heavy Weight History* 2013,  
Charles FRÉGER, From the "RIKISHI" series 2002-2003  
and other works.

\*The exhibition of KAZAMA Sachiko artworks have been cancelled due to the change of this exhibition period.

[Gallery 3]

Allora & Calzadilla *Track and Field* 2011

Gallery 2-3



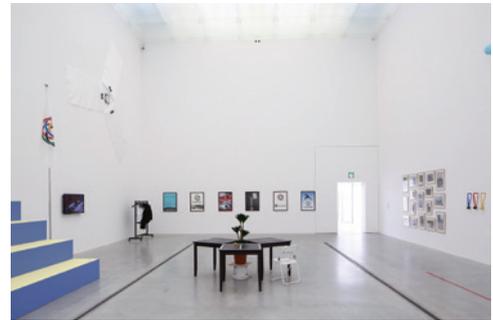
Charles FRÉGER, From the "RIKISHI" series  
2002-2003  
©Charles Fréger, courtesy MEM, Tokyo

Between Gallery 3 and 4, Gallery 4

### Games Without Competition

Baseball, soccer, rugby, tennis, golf, basket ball, table tennis, skiing, swimming, sumo, gymnastics. All of these are defined as a sport, that being “the general term for a game played as a competition or establishment of a record through the skilful use of trained bodies or technology according to a set of rules.” In the pre-modern world, however, the term set itself apart from everyday activities such as work, aligning more the ideas of enjoyment and relaxation, and was even used in the context of artistic pursuits including music, theatre, and dance. Yet, the modern definition of sports appears to have grown distant from the root of the word *sport*, that being a general term for “play” to be “enjoyed.” Here, through the attempts of artists to return sports to the field of play, we consider what a pure sports without competition, and also not based on efficient training of the body or victory according to rules, i.e., “pure play” might be.

Artist: Erwin WURM, Xijing Men



Xijing Men *Chapter 3 Welcome to Xijing - Xijing Olympics 2008*  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
©Xijing Men  
photo: KIOKU Keizo

Garrely 5 + 13

### Creation as the Source of Sports

If we were to break sports down into a number of constituent elements, they might include physical training, competitiveness, non-vocal communication, musical rhythm, military-like strategy, coincidence, gambling, and a monetary economy, among other elements. On the other hand, if we were to think of something that is comprised of these elements, would we think of it as sports? To put it another way, is it possible to invent a brand new sport without compromising this original construction?

*Mr. Tagi's room and dream* by THE EUGENE

Studio presents itself as a possible answer to these questions. The work consists of a pseudo-documentary by the fictional sports historian Mr. Tagi, who documents a new sport consisting of playing chess and performing jazz music at the same time. If the sports we have now were developed to allow people to become so engrossed in their activity that they could escape daily life, then one might say the creative fun that lies at the root of modern sports is cleverly expressed in this work. This exhibition presents a new version of the work, originally presented in 2014 as the artist's graduation project, in the form of a six-screen video installation.

Artist: THE EUGENE Studio



THE EUGENE Studio *Mr.Tagi's room and dream #four-handed 2020*  
Collection of the artist  
photo: THE EUGENE Studio  
©THE EUGENE Studio / Eugene Kangawa

## The Cosmos in a Ball

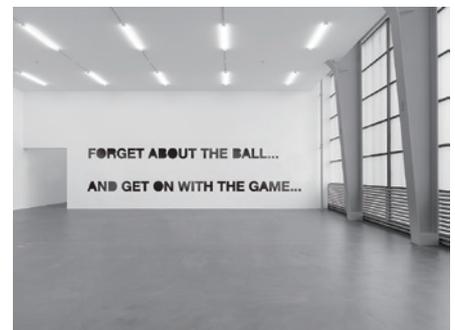
In modern sports, where bodies and records are measured while improving structure and movement in the name of efficiency, one can see the logic of science and engineering becoming bound together. However, in ancient times exercise was a method for communicating with the likes of nature spirit, gods or the dead that normally one could not see, and the ability to lose oneself in the act of exercising was more important than efficiency. Pierre de COUBERTIN, founder of the International Olympic Committee, once said, "For me sport was a religion... with religious sentiment." Even in modern times, one can see certain similarities to the religious act of prayer and the physical act of sport.

In ball sports, too, such as soccer, the ancient Japanese sport of kemari, or rugby, we can also see how sport reflects the societal values of a certain age, from the way the sport takes on different forms in different societies. Here, we will consider sports in the context of matters that exist as a part of, yet outside of, sport itself.

Artist: Gabriel OROZCO, Liam GILLICK



Gabriel OROZCO *Ping-Pong Table* 1998  
Collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  
©Gabriel OROZCO  
photo: KIOKU Keizo



Liam GILLICK *Two Short Texts* 2010  
©Liam Gillick  
Courtesy the artist & TARO NASU

### Related event

## The Exercising Nation-State: KAZAMA Sachiko talks about *Dyslymplia 2680*.

**With:** KAZAMA Sachiko, TAKAHASHI Yosuke

(Curator, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

**Date/time:** July 25, 2020 (Sat.) 14:00-15:30 (doors open 13:45)

**Venue:** Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

**Seats:** About 25 (First come, First served. With Live Streaming.)

**Admission:** Free

\* The archived video will be available online at a later date.

\* In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the event will be held with space between seats.

\* Content subject to change

### About purchasing timed entry tickets

Admission will be restricted to a specific time slot system to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Please purchase a ticket for the desired admission time slot in advance on the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa website.

#### 【Time slots】

(1) 10:00–11:30 (2) 11:30–13:00 (3) 13:00–14:30 (4) 14:30–16:00  
(5) 16:00–17:30 (6) 17:30–19:30 (Fridays and Saturdays only)

\*Visitors may enter the exhibition anytime within their designated time slot, and are free to exit the exhibition anytime after entering. Re-entry is not permitted.

- Purchasing reserved timed-entry tickets / Entering the exhibition

Reserved tickets will be available from 10:00 June 19 until 23:59 on the day before the exhibition viewing date.

Purchase reserved tickets at: [www.kanazawa21.jp](http://www.kanazawa21.jp)

- Select your desired admission time slot (date + time) and purchase a reserved ticket.
- Show the QR code screen from your purchase or a printout of the page in order to enter to the exhibition.



Purchase  
tickets  
here

- Please note

- Reserved tickets cannot be used outside the specified admission time slot. Be sure to enter within the time period indicated on the ticket.
- The number of reserved tickets sold for each time slot is limited (availability on a first come, first served basis).
- Please be aware that there may be a queue at the start of each time slot.
- A small number of same-day tickets will be available each day, however we highly recommend purchasing a reserved ticket ahead.
- Purchased tickets cannot be refunded.
- Please see the museum website for other details.

After reading the below, please request images 1–3 and 5–10 via the Museum Press Room image lending page; and image 4 via the Benesse Art Site Naoshima Press page.

### Images for Publicity

After reading the below, please request images 1–11 to the public relations office ([press@kanazawa21.jp](mailto:press@kanazawa21.jp)).

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