

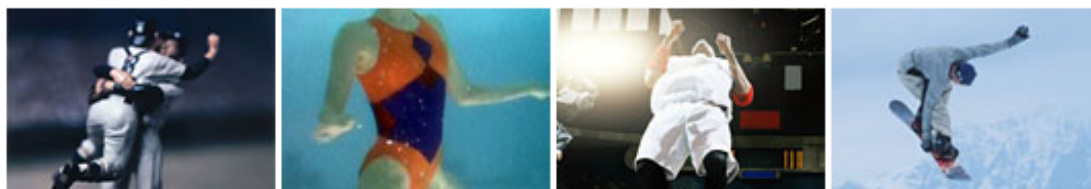
## ABOUT US

Artkrush is a bimonthly email magazine covering the key figures, exhibitions, and trends in international art and design.

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## FEATURE [ Sport and Spectacle ]



David Levinthal / Janet Biggs / Paul Pfeiffer / Ari Marcopoulos

Painter and avid baseball fan [Neil Jenney](#) astutely declares in a 2000 silkscreen print, "[Baseball Is Drama Constructed](#)." As microcosms of society, sports are rich with cultural myths, heroes, and morality, rivaling movies and other art forms as realms of empathy and catharsis.

The image of the athlete — part media celebrity, part hero — is undressed in several resonant works of recent years, which expose sports' metaphoric appeal. [Douglas Gordon](#) and [Philippe Parreno](#)'s 2006 feature film [Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait](#) captures the legendary French footballer's every movement on the field during a game, emphasizing the brooding star's isolation and mounting frustration. American video artist [Paul Pfeiffer](#) elevates basketball players to totemic status by digitally erasing the basket, other players, and team logos in his ongoing photographic series [Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse](#).

Endemic to certain cultures, professional sports reveal societal aspirations and fantasies. [David Hammons'](#) ironic meditations on the status of basketball in the African-American community take shape in his [improvised scrap-metal hoops](#) and his [Basketball Drawings](#), made by bouncing dirtied balls against white sheets of paper. [Brian Jungen](#), a Canadian of [First Nations](#) descent, equates the savagery of sports with cultural imperialism in his series of basketball sneakers reassembled into aboriginal [masks](#), titled [Prototype for New Understanding](#). Duo [Chris Hanson and Hendrika Sonnenberg](#) — in hours-long [video compilations](#) of hockey fights, full-scale replicas of a [Zamboni](#) and crushed [scoreboard](#), and a broken-off hockey stick resting in a [bucket of blood](#) — probe the latent and explicit violence in a game tied to Canada's national identity. [David Levinthal](#) photographs toy figurines of legends from America's pastime in realistic tableaux, from Red Sox great [Ted Williams](#) to the [Yankees'](#) Reggie Jackson.

Californian photographers [Catherine Opie](#) and [Ari Marcopoulos](#) delve into thriving alternative subcultures. Opie's portraits of amateur [surfers](#) capture them fresh from the surf, boards in hand; other photographs document foggy oceanscapes dotted with small figures waiting for a wave. Marcopoulos' photographs of [snowboarders](#) and [skateboarders](#) — both in action and hanging out — walk a delicate line between professional sports photography and amateur snaps.

For many artists, the particular rules of athletic contests are potent allegories. [Laurent Perbos](#), following [Gabriel Orozco](#), reconfigures [ping-pong tables](#) to alter the rules of the game, and situates [tennis courts](#) in [unplayable](#) locations. [Janet Biggs](#) titles her videos after neurological disorders — for instance, [Apraxia](#), a 2002 video of [synchronized swimmers](#) — and psychotropic drugs, such as [Tegretol](#), a two-channel video from 2003 featuring two pairs of high-school wrestlers. Finnish photographer [Salla Tykkä's](#) [Power](#), a 1999 black-and-white film of a shirtless woman [boxing](#) a much larger man, explores traditional ideas of vulnerability and aggression between the sexes. A pair of American artists who investigate male rapport, [Type A](#) invent their own [inane "urban" competitions](#), such as leap-frogging over pilings or racing around concrete pillars in a parking garage. (HGM)

*Neil Jenney's work is on view at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut until September 3; Douglas Gordon is exhibiting at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg through August 12 and at the KUB Kunsthau Bregenz through September 9; the film Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait is now available on DVD; and Paul Pfeiffer is exhibiting new work at Thomas Dane Gallery in London in January 2008.*

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