

Flip, Flop, Foul and Reconciliation: Which Beautiful Game?

Rook Campbell and Dorit Cypis
Los Angeles, California, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Rook Campbell and Dorit Cypis are colleagues, a professor of sport diplomacy and an artist and mediator, two individuals with different disciplinary codes of reading the world of art and the world of sport. They first met in 2000 at the University of Southern California where Dorit was a professor of Visual Culture in the Art Department and Rook was an undergraduate senior. As Rook was redshirted from athletic competition, forced to sit the remaining competitive season out, she opted for Visual Culture as an elective course, a subject that lastingly shaped and enlivened her political eye, questioning, and imaginings.¹

They meet again many years later and continue to engage in the threads of their first conversations, framed this time by Fútbol: the Beautiful Game, an art exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art curated by Franklin Sirmans, that juxtaposes art and sport as discourse on life, beauty and ethics - inevitable contradictory ties that bind us together as humans. While Dorit Cypis knows little about the rules of the game of futbol, she reads the rules of the game of art and the artworks as aesthetic codes of cultural representation. While Rook Campbell knows little about the rules of the game of art, she offers socio-political critique on sport code and the international economy of sport that the art works reference. Together in this first of a three part series, Rook and Dorit play with the “rules” of Fútbol: The Beautiful Game to decipher and complicate its representations of Flip, Flop, Foul and Reconciliation.

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Part One

Dorit Cypis At the exhibition entrance a wall text quotes the writer and philosopher Albert Camus: “*What I know most surely about morality and obligations, I owe to football*”. This focus on morality and ethics frames the exhibition and signals a direction for us that immediately involves dialectical questions of good and evil, universal humanity and direct human relations.

For me there is a personal resonance that reaches back to my first reading of Camus’ *L’Étranger* in teen-hood, and the beginning of my enthrallment with philosophy, identity, ethics and uncertainty. Years later, freshly graduated with an MFA from California Institute for the Arts, 1977, I had a second memorable encounter with Camus while working as a specialty gardener for private indoor gardens in Los Angeles. I was trained by my boss of *Bettina Plantlife* in West Hollywood to always enter stately client homes

¹ To redshirt or take a redshirt year in sport-speak refers to when a collegiate player suspends her/his active competition status with a team while retaining a year of eligibility to participate in sport. (National Collegiate Athletic Association)

from the rear service entrance and to never speak as I might intimidate the homeowner with my educated language. I was a servant for the wealthy.

One of my clients was a recent refugee, male, middle aged, relocated with his family from Iran to Beverly Hills after the coup of the Shah. He built his home at the outskirts of Beverly Hills, above the paved streets, signs and other homes. When I would arrive, always through the kitchen along with the other Salvadoran service folks, I would pass him just seated to have lunch at the dining room table. I would divert my gaze and quickly head upstairs to his private quarters to maintain plants in his bedroom and atrium bathroom. Often I would hear him reciting prayers from the Koran during the traditional morning call to prayer.

One day as I was watering plants near his bed I noticed a copy of *L' Etranger* on the night table. I could not resist picking it up and leafing through the pages when I heard his voice at the bedroom door, "You know Camus?" I nodded sheepishly yes. "When you are finished come down to the dining room please", he added. Expecting to be admonished I was deeply surprised by what awaited me in the dining room - a lunch table setting across from him. "From now on when you come to my home you are invited to join me for lunch". Thereafter we dined together weekly, sharing insights on Camus and life. He was starving for pensive dialogue.

My own status as immigrant with multiple nationalities and family histories of political displacements added an ethical and quirky edge to meeting this Iranian refugee. As a team of two we crossed boundaries of class, religion, ethnicity, nationality - in order to change the rules of engagement. It was our own game.

This memory does not escape me at LACMA. Camus, known within the tradition of Existentialism - where the individual has meaning through action alone - was a team player, goalkeeper of the football team for Universitaire D'Alger, 1930's. I wonder how playing this position figured in his writing, and how it now figures in this exhibition of *The Beautiful Game*?

Rook Campbell Morality and obligation are social, relational concepts that operate aside from, within, and interconnected to the space of sport. In football one chooses sides, suffers defeat, and sometimes soars in victory. In this space the goalkeeper occupies a rather unique role. Team victory, at least in terms of direct scoring, is attributed to the work of the team yet the one tending goal has no direct hand in this 'teamwork'. On the other hand, a team's defeat or a lost goal looms heavy upon one player more than any other, the goalkeeper. Though football's rules call for eleven players on the field per team, team strategies are set in numerical commands in which the goalkeeper's position is ignored or absent. For example, the common "4-4-2" player formation assigns the on-field whereabouts for four strikers, four midfielders, and two defenders. The goalkeeper, the eleventh player, is an unspoken other - necessary and present, but absent.² Well, let's take a look at how this plays out in the exhibition.

²For a more technical taste of sport jargon and a cultural-historic view of football strategy and player number assignment see: <http://bit.ly/1fAU30E>

DC The many live futbol (football, soccer) matches I have been drawn to over the years, have usually been at local parks in cities I've lived in – Montreal, Halifax, Minneapolis, Los Angeles. Always I was glued to the fast paced rough physicality and especially to the beautiful male bodies in motion. Seeing players of such diverse nationalities and ethnicities - Jamaican, Latin, Serbian, African, and European was always compelling, certainly compared to a lack of diverse interaction on the city streets where I lived.

I had never studied the game on wide screen. To visually educate myself to the game, I sat through *Mexico vs. Brazil* (2004) by **Miguel Calderón** (Mexico), a video documenting a contentious game between Mexico and Brazil. Innocently viewing Calderon's video I was not exactly sure what I was watching, the game rules, borders, meanings, nor the histories of the teams or the players. Even as I knew I was watching "art" I seemed to take what I was watching at face value, in fact I wondered what about this video was art and why it was in this show? With no transparent clues to the "game", sport or art, I found myself experiencing the game as elegant – strategic – fluid – violent – theatrical – colorful – collaborative – adversarial – nationalistic – masculine – tactical – war-like – mirror-like – addictive – beautiful. Certainly, I was very aware of the many commercial logos inscribed on surfaces everywhere, architectural and human.

RC Your sport education moment makes sense to me, yet I cannot help but smile slightly sideways, as Calderon's piece 'captures' the most exceptional, high-scoring-machine game I can imagine.

Calderon does, in fact, educate viewers like you to football, by representing the game as authentically as possible. Calderon's *Mexico vs. Brazil* (re) presents football's external form such as field markings, rules, movement of players (e.g., passing the ball, defending and scoring), referee rules, and the interdependent space of fans in the grandstands. However, what lies behind his sport-game narrative is where he breaks the rules to trick the viewer and create profundity.

In his version of a "game", Calderon tightly edits together footage from television broadcasts of multiple football games between Mexico and Brazil, recasting the line-up talents of teams Mexico and Brazil in a regulation-like ninety minute game where Mexico comes out on top with an astounding 17-0 win.³

With Calderon's *Mexico vs. Brazil*, it becomes evident that we are playing two different games with very determined rules, systems, and chalk lines of authority. On the one hand, there is *the* football-story that players and fans want told, want to feel; but clearly, the rules are changed here in this space, the museum. On the other hand, there is the art story that fans want told, want to feel, want to believe.

DC But artists are always fouling, changing the rules, and we love to be fooled.

³ Football is a more modest scoring game: victory margins of one or two points in a game scoreboard of 1-0, 2-1, or 2-0 represent common matchups among rivals. A 3-0 or 4-0 game would be seen as a rather decisive victory, much less 17-0. Yet, it should be noted that such astounding games have happened: a 31-0 score did occur in 2001 World Cup qualifier match up between Australia and American Samoa.

RC With both sport and art we are immersed in alternative world logic. French sociologist Roger Caillois describes the alter universe of sport as one in which “rules themselves create fictions.” To be sure, these fictions are quite serious.

DC Well, you know the age-old dialectical relationship between art and life. It cannot be solved because there is no solution. Art exploits this to shake us out of our norms. In art the definition of what is serious is always contentious.

RC Oh and then there are the fans; they too are decked out in national colors, flags, and even tribal face painting. As scoring starts, an absolute fervor of emotion skyrockets.

The more typical sport narrative of Brazil as winner is turned topsy-turvy in Calderon’s re-stitched game. In this game Mexico dominates! The stadium erupts in reactions of ecstatic dancing among Mexican fans.



Mexico FIFA Fan Fest, Zocalo Square 2010

DC While we in the museum encounter this work soberly, without fanfare.

RC I like to imagine how Calderon first installed his “game” in a São Paulo bar, *in situ* among sport fans, thereby more deviously broaching the serious boundaries of the world

of sport and the world of sport fans. In the São Paulo bar landscape, fans watched an unexpected broadcast of what appeared to be an international matchup between their beloved *A Seleção*, the Brazilian football team and Mexico.⁴ Through art, Calderon exploits the rules of sport – like you said, totally *fouling* or *flopping*– blurring the lines between reality and imagination.⁵

DC Art, queen of illusion does not care, but sport does?

RC The artist is well aware of what's at stake in this "game" – national identity and pride. The players on the field mirror who we imagine we are, and who we want to be. What sort of bafflement, confusion, and shame this work likely stirred among Brazilian fans in São Paulo seems almost cruel! Calderon clearly is playing with "the beautiful game" and its authority to unite or enable solidarity by twisting and teasing the national, tribal elements. A spoilsport, Calderon only recognizes sport's rules so as to subvert the institution as an apparatus of national identity. We have played his game without being made aware until it's too late. This is all much more than a game.

DC I am not part of any tribal allegiance watching his video in the museum and as I came to the "rules of the game" naïve, I was not aware of the ruse. Recognizing it now is not too late for me. Here in the museum his art game speaks to me like a court jester upsetting the court proper, not upsetting me as a viewer. I laugh! I know futbol as a spectacle sport, a mass public hallmark of identity embedded with the same adversarial notions of pride, competition, hierarchy, nationalism, race, and sexuality as within religion and politics.

RC Calderon's transgression reminds me of the artist Ai Wei Wei *fouling*, breaking a Han Dynasty urn, as an art work.

DC In fact, these cultural platforms feed and mirror one another. As an artist, Calderon plays with the illusion of nationalism as a fixed identity and with football's sport power to inscribe this illusion in the believer. Even as believers I'm not sure that football viewers in a São Paulo bar could be duped by his "game". They must know that Mexico has never scored this high against Brazil. This art game perhaps is more a comical farce spelling out their desire and sport game as enforcer. Is Calderon not teaching fans to wake up and see themselves in their grand collusion? Perhaps the other side of the mirror in this game needs to be played out with Mexican believers in a Mexico City bar. Would they celebrate this (their) preposterous "win" with or without seeing themselves perpetuating this "game"? Is this a prank, or is this war?

Let's look at another artist's strategy of crossing national borders to questioningly mirror political impasse. Installed immediately across from Calderon's *Mexico vs. Brazil* is ***The Rules of the Game*** (2000-2001) by **Gustavo Artigas** (Mexico), a video documentation of high school soccer and basketball matches between Mexican players from just across the US border in Tijuana, and American players from San Diego, USA. Artigas defies a politically aggressive gesture on the part of the USA – a 600 plus mile wall built to keep

⁴ The Brazilian national team is widely known by its nickname, *A Seleção*, or *The Selection*.

⁵ We will further define flopping when we discuss Paul Pfeiffer's work, *Caryatid*, in part two of this series.

“illegal” Mexicans out of the USA, thus spatially, socially and psychically separating two countries. Artigas models reconciliation, a relationship-centric approach, by bringing youth of two separated nations together through sport and art. Charles Villa-Vicencio, Theologian and Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation writes, *“Reconciliation cannot be defined in a neat set of rules. It involves grace. It is about making what seems impossible possible.”* *The Rules of the Game* is the one artwork in this exhibition that utilizes futbol as a frame for pro-active social goals beyond social commentary.



Fence-wall dividing USA and Mexico - Left: California, USA Right: Tijuana, Mexico

RC Both works of Artigas and Calderon are about seeing Mexico – (re) seeing Mexico. This is the substance of nation branding: these artists are involved in public-to-public diplomacy. Sport diplomacy seeks to change attitudes and values through dialogue, encounter, and exchange through sport. For nation states, sport diplomacy offers a technique by which to nation brand. Even Calderon can be seen in a sport diplomacy vein, as *Mexico vs. Brazil* aims to influence attitudes and impressions of fixed national identities through ruse – through propaganda even – by crafting an inflated image of Mexico. Surely, this Mexican football “victory” evokes respect!

*We fold into a deep conversation on art, sports, and the cultural politics that weave through both. Seated on a bench in front of the video **Perreo** (2013), by **Oscar Murillo** (Columbia), we feel as though we are among the curbside viewers in the video watching*

the game on their street. While they are in Columbia, we are in the white box of the gallery in Los Angeles.

RC This game seems to capture the organic, playful, spontaneous aspects of sport as everyday street level play, innocent enough except that the street players wear jerseys and pants that seem to mimic the corporate branded gear of professional football players and teams (*i.e.*, *Real Madrid C.F.*, German National Team).

DC We think this is an innocent game, but is it another guise?

RC Absolutely. This piece is about nostalgia, that romanticized love of the game, the dreamy, beautiful, emancipatory potentials of sport play and its celebration, yet this game is, as you say, a guise.

In this video a relationship becomes established between a guy with a home video camera and the street players he is recording.

A kind of machismo bantering develops between the camera and players who seem to become more conscious of their performance for the camera.

Some players remain focused on the ball, ignoring the camera. Others welcome the camera's recording powers. Absent here is a power differential between them. They are all neighborhood guys.

I point this out to bring up the power of the camera to spawn fiction. Within mass mediated consumer football, sport, media and spectator collapse into an inseparable nexus of predigested tropes that we all know so well - a heightened mimicry of masculinity performed for the camera lens, to be digested by the present and imagined spectators.

DC Look again at the mediation composed within this intentional video artwork. The artist has placed us, the viewers, in the museum facing the viewers on the street within the video watching the live game. The street players play between us – one audience is present, the other is present only through the camera. In the museum we are in a privileged position, watching them watch the game. The fact that there are two audiences for the players is always the case in a mass media game. Here, Murillo triangulates the experience of watching and being watched, underlining the nature of media and our collusion in the construction of fiction. Who is watching which real game?

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*In Part One, we explored aspects of viewing, being viewed and the viewing audience within the elite international game and the more local game through aesthetic strategies of **Artegas**, **Murillo**, and **Calderon**. Each artist presents the basic parameters of sport rules by which the game is formally or informally scripted among participants, even if the artists don't abide by these same rules.*

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Part Two

In the second part of our dialogue on Fútbol: The Beautiful Game, we question the corporate business and commodification of sport as framed by art, and can't help but question this commercial framing of art as well. As a field of power, sport has become a social, political and economic tool and like society, reflects stories of colonization, racism, and violence. Is art implicated?

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DC At the entry to Fútbol: The Beautiful Game is **Maracanã, Nelson Leirner** (Brazil, 2003), a large room sized stadium reminiscent of a Roman coliseum where once upon a time the audience was poised to watch gladiators massacre one another. Plastic replicas of two superheroes, "the hulk" and a guy in red leotards carrying a weapon take the place of gladiators in this coliseum.

RC Though this could be any stadium anywhere, this stadium is a replica of a particular stadium, the Maracanã in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Built in 1950, the Maracanã stands centrally in the city like a concrete spaceship, a sign of modernity, progress. The Maracanã is infused with Brazilian national imagination and collective identity, as well, with a global imagination of football and of Brazil. Over decades it has provided poetic and lyrical substance for Brazilian writers and artists lamenting the national team's World Cup yearnings and defeats.

In 2012, UNESCO awarded Rio de Janeiro status as a World Heritage Site, but it was a tad too late for the Maracanã. Renovations to modernize the stadium with a new roof and luxury technologies to host the 2014 World Cup were already underway. These changes refashioned and undermined its earlier local emblematic and social-orientation to one more in service of global audiences and games.

The Maracanã, pride of Brazil, conscripted to host both the current 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, today houses the most jumbo of jumbotrons in the world - bigger than the Texas jumbotrons of the Dallas Cowboys, the Houston Texans, and of Texas A&M University, all who have been in a jumbotron race for the past half decade.



Maracanã Stadium, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

DC. I feel my alienation from sport. The word jumbotron sounds like it belongs in the land of "the hulk". The artist was already sarcastic by 2003, counteracting mainstream Brazilian identification with the "glory" of the stadium even as pre global 1950's architecture. As in the ancient coliseum, the artist's stadium pits spectacle and spectator as seamlessly gazing at each other. Like a mirror reflecting its subject, they complete one another. In *Maracana* all subjects, spectators and spectacle, are represented as commercial pop souvenir figures – cartoon superheroes, mythical icons, fictional gods, relics, aliens, charms and monsters. In them human identity flattens out to connote global commerce where fantasy and desire blend and obscure any human dimension of lived difference.

The future looking 1950's of the original Maracana, full of hope and renewal, by the 1990's had become a commercial corporate globalization project that had reshaped identities of human difference into a pancake.

RC Football welcomes and supports all fervent dogmas and passions equally. This is both its beauty and ugliness, depending on where you stand, of course.

DC In Leirner's arrangement "people" are standing in a precise order, intentional and seemingly secure, but there is trouble in this utopia.



Nelson Leirner, *Maracanã*

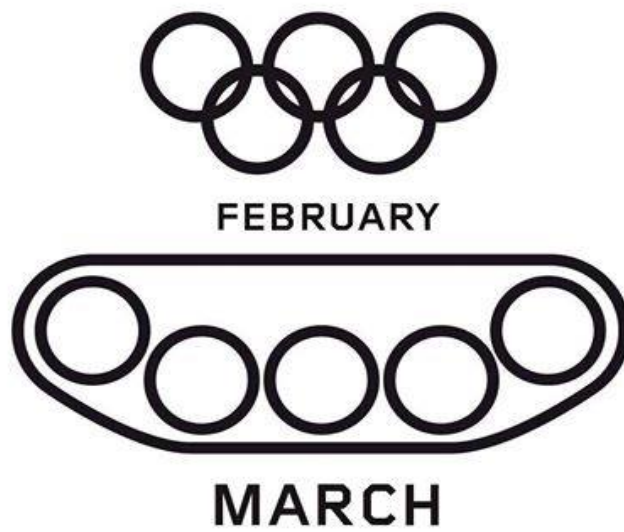
RC All clanned-up, like with like! I must add that the 2-3-5-player formation on the field of *Maracanã* is mighty bold - absurd because a coach would never call for this offense-heavy tactic. It's not feasible in a modern game, even if this may have existed in an earlier historic era of the game. Surely this is an aesthetic choice by the artist!

DC The offense heavy "game" is the game of globalization, religious imperialism and the imperative of winning.



Nelson Leirner, *Maracanã*

DC Here's another 5-formation! *From Sochi with Love.*



From Sochi with Love, online blog 2014

RC Well, that's another spectacle, for sure.

DC Russia's recent incursion into Ukraine, seizing control over Crimea soon after the Olympic games, certainly reverses its spectacle representation of normalization at the Sochi Games.

RC Sochi's award to host the Winter 2014 Games was a tool for Russia to show that it is a global player, that Russia has arrived with the capability to act and coordinate action on a global level. For Russia, the Sochi Games offered an important nation branding opportunity to rewrite the traumas of Chechnya.

DC And the break-up of the Soviet Union.

RC Their goal was to dispel national stereotypes of co-mingled state and non-state assets of corruption and to project an image of normalization. Can Russia chalk this up as a win?

DC Illusion is easy to represent.

RC Who's watching, condoning the political spectacle?!

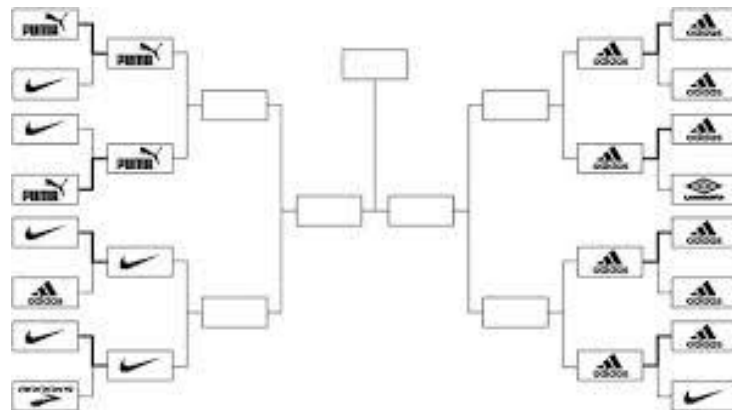
DC Spectacle succeeds with the viewer's complicity - spectacle and spectator merge. Nobody is witness because everyone has complied. The pop culture plastic icon audience and players reflect the same generic, cultural belief frozen in time. They stand beneath icons of a repeating plastic Jesus Christ hovering over them at the periphery of the stadium. Look closer. At the very center of *Maracanã* is a single soccer ball in the form of a piggy bank. The architecture of spectacle surrounds it. This central icon bridges everyone's desire - money.



Nelson Leirner, *Maracanã*

DC In today's Brazil billions have been spent to brand their 2014 "World Cup" as seamlessly perfect with what economic trickle down to the underclass of Brazil?

RC The brand is entirely disconnected from the streets and the growing underclass demands for basic rights - education, health, housing, and public services. Meanwhile corporate wars over branding turf continue. Is the Brazil World Cup an Adidas World Cup or a Nike World Cup? Adidas is the official sponsor but its rival Nike ambushes marketing.



Graphic illustration charting corporate turf war, 2010 World Cup

DC Superimposed over “the beautiful game” is a game of war between corporate financial brands that on the sport field appear on shoes, jerseys, and architectural surfaces. Who owns this game? Meanwhile at LACMA **Parallel**, **George Afedzi-Hughes** (Ghana, 2011), defines an equation between war, sport and commodification.



George Afedzi-Hughes, *Parallel*

DC What about the player who wears the “Adidas” shoe? What's his part in this? What about the artist painting the shoe? Is he also a partner? And what about the viewing consumer?

The words of Camus intoned at the exhibition entrance haunt us as we move through the galleries, *“What I know most surely about morality and obligations, I owe to football”*.

RC Whose interests are promoted, or not, when we find ourselves part of a sport, a cultural world that is not exactly part of our choosing?

DC We find ourselves in an entropic space. The soccer ball of **Catharsis**, **George Afedzi-Hughes** (Ghana, 2008), - fresh, clean, sparkling and suspended mid canvas over the goal line of a playing field - or is this a corner? The ball seems to have been kicked from outside the painting frame, now directionless and frozen in time and space. Winner and loser are unknown.



George Afedzi-Hughes, *Catharsis*

DC Trouble is everywhere. Upon entering the exhibition hall we passed under, ***Obverse Reverse XIV*, Dario Escobar** (Guatemala, 2013) - soccer balls caught in a net, turned inside out and suspended high overhead. Their soft grey colour makes them appear ghost-like, beautiful and menacing as dark clouds before a storm. Like “the beautiful game”, sublime.

RC Menacing - well, imagine my surprise and delight at seeing ***Post Match*, Leo Fitzmaurice**, (Great Britain, 2013) - international cigarette boxes (re) fashioned into paper cut out football jerseys. For months I have kept a digital image of one such cut out jersey on my computer screen, as teaching tool and as visual pleasure, never questioning its source.

DC The pack of cigarette jerseys stand in as replicas of sport teams we are assumed to know - as familiar as cigarettes widely distributed in global nation states where smoking is still as popular a leisure sport as is football. The artist makes his point - smoking, futbol, corporate branding go hand in hand.

RC Notice that each cigarette pack cutout jersey has the team's name represented above the player's heart, drawing attention to how these team names also announce the corporate cigarette sponsor behind them - Win, Prince, Sovereign, Royals, Club, Palace,

Special, Nil - steeped in references of victory, monarchy, power and dominance.



Leo Fitzmaurice, *Post Match*. (Credit: JP Plunier)

RC I'm thinking of how the 2007 changes in European Union law have impeded sport sponsoring and advertising partnerships when it prohibited the advertising of tobacco products in European motorcar racing.⁶ For Formula One (F1) auto racing, the EU regulatory directive challenged the long-standing partnership (1984-2015) between Ferrari and Philip Morris International. However, through a creative subterfuge, Ferrari found a way to retain its kindred red Marlboro cigarette sponsor. No longer allowed to decal its racing machines in Marlboro's name brand logo, the F1 Ferrari's graphic design team instead opted to adorn the motor racing livery with what resembled a price scanning code, perhaps, for a pack of Marlboro cigarettes (2010)!⁷ Avoiding the

⁶ Portions of the dialogue published online at [Fields of Green](#)

⁷ Under pressure and controversy F1 team Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro opted to remove the bar code

corporate name or image of Marlboro, the Ferrari F1 Team started racing in European and global circuits with a UPC symbol on the car's air box!



Ferrari F1, 2010

DC Ha! Brilliant. Sounds dangerously close to Conceptual art, Institutional Critique, Appropriation art - except that the public today is better trained to read the covert power of visual imagery. But are they any more critical?

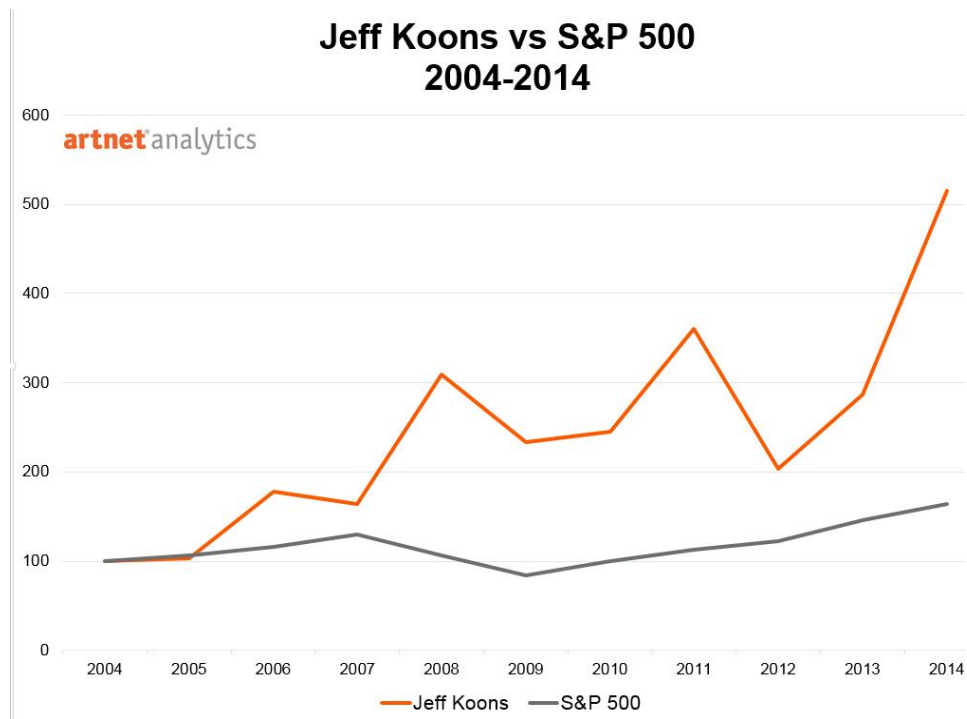
The international art market has an equivalent, albeit lower stakes, side to the corporate branding you note. Wait till you see this Rook, the partnership between American artist Jeff Koons, fashion, the art market and Wall Street. Koons was a financial trader before entering the professional art field, and has always understood the potential market relationship between the two, as did Warhol several decades earlier. H&M is a lower cost clothing outlet of knockoff designer brands. *"H&M does not own factories, but instead buys products from independent suppliers that are close long-term partners of H&M. We work to bring about long-term improvement for people and the environment – in the supply chain, the garment lifecycle and the communities in which we are active."*

Now branded with a Jeff Koons artwork on its facade that in the bubble art-market is worth millions, what is H&M announcing? As a shopper, even if you don't want to play this game, enter H&M and you are implicated. Seamless.

livery, and ultimately Ferrari released a public statement denying the design was, in fact, a barcode. Shortly after, an alternative design emerged – a white outlined, empty rectangle upon the Ferrari. To be sure, the team name also came under attack. Since 2011, the team is now officially called simply, Scuderia Ferrari.



New York City, June 2014



DC Flipping is another quick art commodification strategy - wealthy collectors chase art, usually paintings by young male artists, and resell them quickly for a huge profit. Recently one of the most coveted young artists is **Oscar Murillo**. Last year alone, work by Murillo generated \$4.8 million at auction, according to *Artnet*.

RC Isn't he the artist of *Mexico v Brazil* who we spoke about in Part I? Runaway regulation! Who are the winners and who are the losers when a few economic wheeling and dealing stakeholders determine the cultural forms for the masses?

DC Our moral compass blends art/sport and commerce, making it impossible to choose how to interact as a viewer, a player, a maker. We're on a spin here, and so is the exhibition curator. Look at the collision between beauty, race, colonization, and commodification in ***Kick That, Satch Hoyt*** (UK/Germany, 2006). A gem and euro symbol studded black soccer ball, are held up by three golden bananas, encased in a plexi glass box. OK, this is easy: African banana republics colonized by the British and symbolically commodified through football.



Satch Hoyt, *Kick That*

RC Yes, Hoyt has created a rather *bling* trophy adorned with Swarovski crystals and

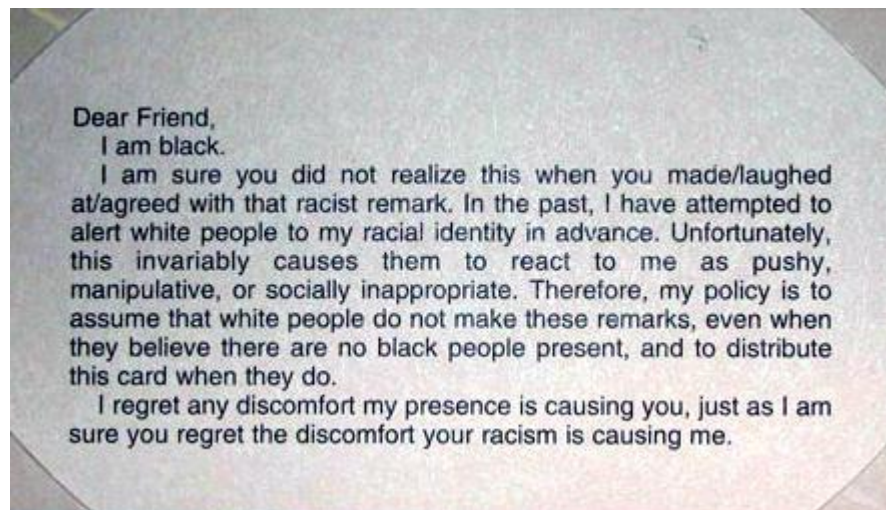
mirror-panels reflecting our shiny faces seeing ourselves. Putting on the headphones that accompany Hoyt's trophy, I became immersed in syncopated dance electronic beats and tunes. Lyrical refrains - *"penalty"* and *"magnificent goal"* - evoke common football match pronouncements, but as the audio continues I heard clues of more sinister football dealings. Like the ball's adornment with currency symbols and bananas, Hoyt interjects an attack on the game's money and racial ugliness. I closed my eyes to hear and imagine the audio story - *"you're fired ... if you put your feet on the turf"*.

Touted for its ability to foster peace and solidarity, football does not always live up to its halo reputation. Racism on the football pitch (field) has long been and remains a major problem. Hoyt seems to be referencing a 1982 incident with the national call-up of black footballer Cyrille Regis to represent England in the international match against Northern Ireland. As Regis' teammates received fan mail, he received a letter with a bullet accompanying a note, which read *"if you put your feet on the turf, you'll get one of these"*.

Racism isn't a relic of former times and games. Social relations on the pitch and surrounding the game aren't so color blind. Fans (and players) continue to taunt opposing players of color with monkey chants and banana throwing. A Brazilian striker playing for FC Barcelona, Daniel Alves' (Dani Alves) response to having a banana thrown on the field during his corner kick was to pick up the fruit and eat it. This ignited a viral solidarity campaign via social media: celebrities and fans the world over posted photos while eating bananas.

DC Where is Donald Sterling when you need him to clearly pronounce racism? We who are outraged by his racist remarks are quick to condemn yet how aware are we of the daily small aggressions we enact on one another, with a glance, an assumption, a judgment, or avoidance? How aware are we of our internalized bias?

In the 1980's the artist Adrian Piper pushed the discourse on race by distributing a printed card to the public directly addressing complicity.



Adrian Piper, *Race Card*

DC From race war to ethnic war, in the next gallery is ***Artifice Master, The Autostrategem***, Alon Levin (Israel, 2006-2013). Seven years in the making this carefully constructed fine cabinet mimics the analog parlor/arcade game Fußball.

RC Levin mechanizes the visible chain gearing between Fußball player and opponent. Linked together in mirror (counter) movement, opponents can never be differentiated. However tricky, brilliant, or grand a player's technique may be, the gallery player who turns the game handles to flip a player is actually playing against him/herself. *Artifice Master, The Autostrategem* breaks and masters all the rules at the same time. Optimist, realist, or defeatist in outlook, there is perpetuity to this state of play.

DC Entropy, again! Levin has created a boxed in, self-contained, hermetic and self-defeating game. Who would know this better than a Jewish Israeli artist?



Alon Levin, *Artifice Master, The Autostrategem*

RC FIFA needs this piece! to help in its current escalating Middle East football tensions. Since 1998, FIFA's recognition of the Palestinian Football Association has enabled Palestine to compete among other national federations on the international sport stage. In 2012, the overwhelming majority of the United Nations upgraded Palestinian status to *Non-Member Observer State*, with nine states, including Israel,

voting against. Though recognized as a global player, Palestinian Football Association has not had a smooth go in football relations with Israel. In early 2014, after Israeli security forces opened fire on two Palestinian youth footballers, hitting them in their feet as they were on their way home from practice, the international friction heated significantly. The Palestinian Football Association has demanded that FIFA take attacks, detainment, imprisonment and death seriously.

Will FIFA warrant suspension of Israel's international football credentials? Acquiring institutional credentials and being afforded the opportunity and conditions to ensure fair play is not the same for all international players. Levin underlines the premise of a *level playing field*, making the question real. Can “playing” *Artifice Master, The Autostrategem* reveal to us our loggerheads and facilitate reconciliation?

DC While domestic Israeli politics never has a dull moment, and apparently neither does FIFA, Italian football super-club *FC Inter Milan* models reconciliation. As eight Inter Milan players are currently representing their respective countries at the World Cup in Brazil, the club can leverage its name and status to bring diverse populations chronically in conflict to reconcile through sport. Their initiative, called *Inter Campus*, aims to use the game of football as an educational tool to restore the “right to play” to 10,000 children across 25 countries. In Israel/Palestine, *Inter Campus* has brought together Israeli Jews, Palestinians, and African Refugees to compete, train, and play together. It's not resolution. It is engagement.



DC The underbelly of big politics is daily connection. Remember the artwork we spoke about in Part One by Artigas, suggesting reconciliation over the US build wall at the US/Mexico border? As my father used to say, “*on the other hand, there are five fingers*”. We are reminded to never underestimate the “beautiful” spirit potential between sport, art and people.

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*In Part Two, we looked closely at aesthetic strategies used by **Leirner, Afedzi-Hughes, Escobar, Fitzmaurice, Hoyt and Levin**, artists in Fútbol: The Beautiful Game, to uncover and underline the sport and art fields' overt and covert dealings in globalizing world economy, colonization, violence and racism.*

In Part Three, we will consider the theatricality of the beautiful games of art and sport as we further open questions of gender, sexuality, flopping, and fouling.