

Exhibition: *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game*
On View: February 2–July 20, 2014
Location: BCAM, Level 3



(Image credits on page 2)

(Los Angeles—January 9, 2014) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game*, an exhibition examining the sport of fútbol, or soccer, as it is known in the United States. Featuring approximately 50 works by nearly 30 artists on the subject of *fútbol*—often referred to as “the beautiful game”—the exhibition looks at issues of nationalism, identity, globalism, and mass spectacle as well as the shared human experience between spectators from a multitude of cultures. In anticipation of the 2014 World Cup that takes place in Brazil this summer, LACMA’s exhibition considers the sport through video, photography, painting, sculpture, and large-scale installation.

"A globally beloved sport celebrated in the context of a museum: what a great opportunity to explore the international scope of soccer through the lens of art," said Michael Govan, CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director of LACMA. "*Fútbol* should excite all, especially as it coincides with the World Cup in Brazil in summer 2014."

"When people watch a game, they feel inspired by the spirit of the team, the fans, and the sense of community," remarked Franklin Sirmans, Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and department head of contemporary art at LACMA, "We, the fans, create the spirit of the team via our rituals. Witnessing a game is one of the few occasions during which a collective sense of enthusiasm is still possible. This exhibition explores that energy."

As the only city to boast two Major League Soccer teams and as the seat of growth in American soccer, Los Angeles is the perfect place in which to explore the dynamics of the sport through art.

Exhibition Overview

Two room-sized video installations anchor *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game*. The first, *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* by the artists Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon, provides an

intimate portrait of Zinedine Zidane—one of the greatest soccer players in the history of the sport—during the course of a single match. Meanwhile, Stephen Dean’s *Volta*, set to samba music, directs its gaze at stadium crowds and draws attention to both the pandemonium and organized ritual of mass audiences.

Other works by artists including Robin Rhode, Kehinde Wiley, Petra Cortright, Andy Warhol, Mark Bradford, Mary Ellen Carroll, Hassan Hajjaj, and Andreas Gursky, among others, provide a sense of the possibilities of the sport as a universal conversation piece. With artists hailing from as far afield as Morocco, Germany, Mexico, and South Africa—in addition to several Los Angeles–based artists—the geographic range represented in *Fútbol: The Beautiful Game* reflects the global reach of the sport.

Gustavo Artigas’s *The Rules of the Game* examines the ways in which communities that play different sports (basketball, soccer, and football) perceive one another, while Miguel Calderón’s video *Mexico vs. Brasil* dramatically unfolds during an unlikely victory for Mexico. Chris Beas harkens back to classical modes of presentation in his paintings: his athletic figures are depicted in a celebratory, almost mythic light. Meanwhile, the athletes featured in Generic Art Solutions’ works are almost caricatures caught in moments of extreme dramatization.

In collaboration with LACMA, a new edition of prints has been commissioned by Self Help Graphics under the direction of executive director, Evonne Gallardo. The new prints by Carolyn Castano, Nery Gabriel Lemus, Ana Serrano, Dewey Tafoya, Ami Motevelli and Mario Ybarra, Jr. address varied aspects of the game—from a commemoration for the Colombian soccer player Andres Escobar who was shot and killed shortly after the 1994 World Cup, seemingly for his mistaken own goal, to references to the Olmec culture of the first major civilization in Mexico.

As a nod to the imminent World Cup, the exhibition’s design alludes to the Brazilian flag with graphic symbolism as it evokes the environs of the sport—sun, sky, and grass—through a vibrant yellow, blue, and green.

Fútbol: The Beautiful Game is accompanied by a robust program of public events.

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Support is provided by Mehran and Laila Taslimi, with additional funding from the Wallis Annenberg Director’s Endowment Fund.

Images (page 1)

Left: Robin Rhode, *Hondjie*, 2001, L&M, Los Angeles, © Robin Rhode

Center: Miguel Calderón, *Mexico vs. Brasil*, 2004, Courtesy of the artist and kurimanzutto, Mexico City, © Miguel Calderón

Right: Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon, *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, 2006, © Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes over 120,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art, Latin American art, ranging from pre-Columbian masterpieces to works by leading modern and contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over a million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives, such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement at lacma.org. Situated in Hancock Park on over 20 acres in the heart of Los Angeles, LACMA is located between the ocean and downtown.

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