

RELATED TALKS, SCREENINGS & EVENTS

Exhibition Tours

Every Sat, 3pm, & Last Fridays, 7pm, Free
Starts at South London Gallery

Gallery assistants lead informal drop-in tours of the exhibition.

Who's in? An Estate-Wide Football Game

Fri 24 Aug, 2–4pm, Free, Dalwood Street, SE5

Artist Anthony Schrag and young people from neighbouring housing estates invite local residents from Sceaux Gardens and Southampton Way to take part in an inter-estate football game.

Football on Film

Sat 1 Sep, 7–10pm, Free, Jessie Duffet TRA Hall,
Wyndham and Comber estate, SE5

A special screening of Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's feature film, *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, 2006, is accompanied by short films made with artist Carl Stevenson and young people from Wyndham and Comber estate.

Aleksandra Mir in conversation with Alice Rawsthorn

Wed 12 Sep, 7pm, Free

South London Gallery

London-based artist Aleksandra Mir discusses her work and current installation with Alice Rawsthorn, design critic of the International Herald Tribune.

Booking essential.

Forthcoming Exhibitions

Rashid Johnson

28 Sep – 25 Nov 2012

Sanja Ivekovic

12 Dec 2012 – 18 Feb 2013

Pae White

1 Mar – 14 May 2013

PURSUIT OF PERFECTION: THE POLITICS OF SPORT

EXHIBITION GUIDE

SOUTH LONDON GALLERY AND SOUTHWARK OLD TOWN HALL

27 JUL – 14 SEP 2012

SLG

South London Gallery 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH
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Twitter: @SLG_artupdates



This exhibition is part of **SLG LOCAL** which is sponsored by **Bloomberg**
and also funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.



LOTTERY FUNDED

PURSUIT OF PERFECTION: THE POLITICS OF SPORT

27 JUL - 14 SEP 2012

**South London Gallery and Southwark Old Town Hall,
65 & 31 Peckham Road, SE5 8UB**
Admission free

**Michel Auder / Roderick Buchanan / John Gerrard /
Lucy Gunning / Janice Kerbel / Aleksandra Mir /
Jonathan Monk / Ariel Orozco / Paul Pfeiffer**

When sport is omnipresent both in London and internationally, *Pursuit of Perfection: The Politics of Sport* challenges assumptions that art and sport do not mix. Works born of artists' fascination in the relationship between the two are brought together to present alternative and, at times, quirky interpretations of an ultimately weighty subject. In different ways and to varying degrees of seriousness or wit, the works play on some of the issues raised by sport, the politics surrounding it and its representation in the media. Spanning the SLG's main and first floor galleries, the recently vacated Southwark Old Town Hall and off-site events on three local housing estates, the exhibition also marks an important moment in the history of the South London Gallery's programmes as they extend into a range of social settings as part of a new long-term initiative entitled *SLG Local*.

South London Gallery – Main Gallery

Aleksandra Mir's *Triumph*, 2009, creates a stunning spectacle of 2,529 trophies collected over the course of a year in Sicily when the artist advertised in the local press, asking people to give her their old trophies for a token sum of 5 euros. The response was impressive, and it quickly became clear that people were actually keen to get rid of their trophies, each of which was then carefully cleaned and documented to start a new life as part of Mir's work. The resulting collection spans some forty years, revealing a surprisingly rich variety of design across that period and a plethora of stories of victorious moments. Displayed on used plinths from the stores of the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, which originally commissioned the work in 2009, the trophies are arranged in small clusters, lined up on the floor in stylistic groupings or piled up in huge heaps of glittering detritus. Together they expose the tension between their symbolism of accomplishment, versus their physical reality as often-garish, mass-produced items of little value. Above all, however, *Triumph* makes a powerful visual statement about our tendency towards nostalgia, and the temptation to dwell on memories of past youth, vitality and joy.

South London Gallery – First Floor Galleries

Works in these spaces present a variety of responses to football, one of the world's most popular and widely reported sports. In the front room, Paul Pfeiffer's video piece features players in plain red, yellow or blue shirts with the markings and therefore team allegiances removed, to create a mesmerising performance of dives and falls through a montage of televised action on the pitch. Roderick Buchanan's video *83/03*, 2003, reflects on international newspaper reportage of matches from the perspective of the losing teams, while Jonathan Monk has manipulated shots of critical moments in various games to shift the position of the ball.

Ariel Orozco's photograph is of a malnourished stray dog whose life was transformed when the artist had it tattooed with the black hexagonal markings of a football. In a city well known for its love of the game, and also for the number of stray dogs that live there, the dog became a local celebrity overnight, loved, petted and fed wherever it went.

Southwark Old Town Hall

Janice Kerbel's *Ballgame (Pregame)*, 2009, transports us from the empty space of the recently vacated Town Hall to the scene of a baseball game via an audio commentary, delivered in honeyed tones and with dead-pan wit by a voice-actor. The scripted commentary is for the pregame of a fictional event, the mathematically average game, as calculated by the artist on the basis of her meticulous research and analysis of statistics relating to the past 100 years of baseball history.

Michel Auder's low-tech video collage was composed of clips which he filmed directly from the TV as he watched the 1984 LA Olympics. Focusing on the human body, eroticised and mechanised in its pursuit of perfection, the film has been described by Auder as 'an ode to human flexibility à la pelvis', combining his unabashed crotch gazing with a deft use of scratch video.

Lucy Gunning's video, *The Footballers*, 1996, documents a performance for which two women wearing utilitarian dresses, shin pads and boots have a kick about in an empty gallery space. Coincidentally made in the year when women's football was first recognised as an Olympic sport, the improvised choreography of the piece results at times in the women mirroring each others' movements, whereas at others the fact that they are pitted against each other in competitive mode comes to the fore.

In the former council chamber, *Exercise (Djibouti) 2012* by John Gerrard is a highly sophisticated simulation, first presented by Modern Art Oxford as part of the London 2012 Festival. Inspired by found documentary images of US military exercises in Djibouti (Horn of Africa) and informed by research into athletic achievement, the work reflects on the relationship between competitive sport, military training, theatrical performance and dance. Red and blue teams of runners, based on the colours of war gaming, complete the grueling task of running in figures of eight in the desert sun. Occasionally they pause for a few moments, and every hour and a half they assume resting poses for a longer period of time. The enduring impression is of the relentlessness of their task and the suppression of the individual for the sake of the team. Periodically throughout the piece, coloured smoke bombs are released, each one corresponding to a colour of the rainbow and directly mimicking those of the camouflage smoke used in military exercises. The work is neither completely synthetic nor strictly real, and exists in 'real time' (Djibouti: GMT +3 hours), orbiting over a yearly cycle that incorporates the movements of sun, moon and stars.

Biographies of the artists are available from reception at the SLG and Southwark Old Town Hall.

LIST OF WORKS

Main Gallery

1. Aleksandra Mir, *Triumph*, 2,529 trophies, 2009. Originally commissioned by the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. Courtesy the artist

First Floor Galleries

2. Paul Pfeiffer, *Caryatid*, 2008, 3 x 32" black video monitors. Courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London

3. Ariel Orozco, *Perro Balón*, 2003, Fuji Crystal Chromogenic Archival C-Print. Courtesy the artist and Selma Feriani Gallery, London

4. Roderick Buchanan, *83/03*, 2003, video, approx 60 mins. Courtesy the artist

5. Jonathan Monk, *The little things make all the difference*, 2012, newspaper collage. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery, London

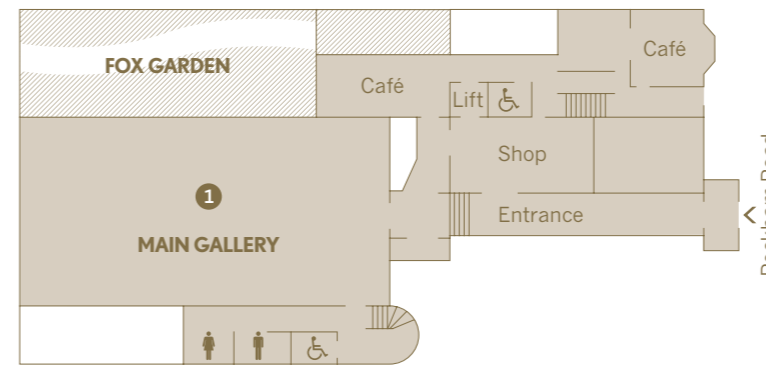
Southwark Old Town Hall
6. Janice Kerbel, *Ballgame (Pregame)*, 2009, audio, 12'. Courtesy the artist and Greengrassi, London

7. Michel Auder, *The Games: Olympic Variations*, 1984, DVC Pro, 21' 36". Courtesy the artist

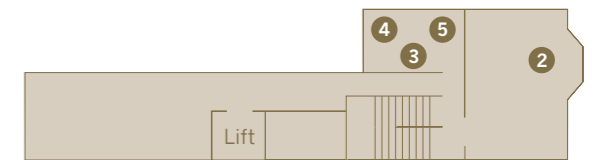
8. Lucy Gunning, *The Footballers* (1994–96), 30', original format VHS C PAL. Performers: Soula Papakis & Amanda Cattle. Courtesy the artist and Matt's Gallery, London

9. John Gerrard, *Exercise (Djibouti) 2012*, 2012. Courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London

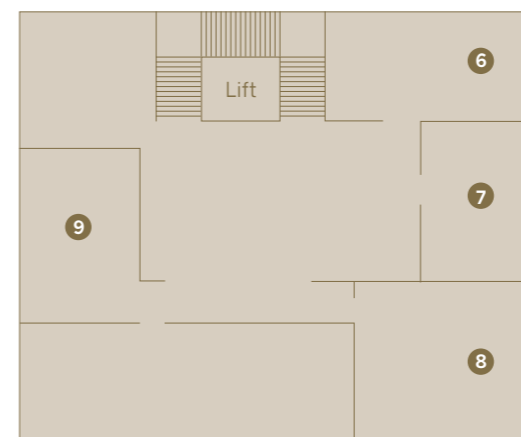
SLG GROUND FLOOR



SLG FIRST FLOOR GALLERIES



SOUTHWARK OLD TOWN HALL FIRST FLOOR



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