

p r o j e c t 8

PRESS RELEASE

13 February 2023
For immediate release

RECREATION

Art, sport and leisure

25 February – 1 April 2023

Opening: 24 February 2023, 6–8 pm
Performances: 10 March, 6 pm and 18 March, 3 pm



Judy Dalton & Cūrā8, *Untitled (After Wimbledon)*, 2022. Video with sound, 4k ProRes, 23'24"

Curated by Cūrā8, and featuring: Andrew Barber, Sophia Cai, Jon Campbell, Judy Dalton & Cūrā8, Shaun Gladwell, Isabella Hone-Saunders, Sarah Rudledge, Nick Selenitsch, Mark Shorter, Peixuan Yang and Anne Zahalka.

Project8 Gallery presents *Recreation*, an exhibition that explores the human inclination toward play through the experiential realm of art. Bringing together the work of 11 artists who reflect broadly on leisure activities, this exhibition looks across sporting and artistic histories, themes and forms.

Amongst its works, this expansive exhibition includes a collaboration between former tennis champion Judy Dalton and Project8's in-house curators Cūrā8; Shaun Gladwell's active translation of Duchamp's seminal *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913; Anne Zahalka's millennial photo-media portrayal of places Australian people engage in leisure; and a mini curatorial project by Sophia Cai of her personal collection of BTS fan memorabilia.

Two performances will also take place during the exhibition. Mark Shorter presents a 30-minute durational performance inside a netted enclosure on 10 March from 6 pm, and Sophia Cai presents a performance lecture with K-Pop fans and a dance troupe on 18 March from 3 pm.

Some sporting and recreational activities, such as surfing, dancing, and Tai chi, are inflected with powerful aesthetic and cultural associations. Like artists, specialised devotees can find it difficult to verbally express what they do and why they do it, deferring instead to some sense of shared embodied knowledge accessible only to those who participate.

For artists, it can seem that the kinds of people interested in sport are rarely the same kinds of people that are interested in art. Yet directly or indirectly, most of us participate in some way in the mass industrialisation of sport and leisure. Perhaps, however, if we look past competitiveness and monetisation, we might wonder if there is something bigger to be found in some of the more mundane and everyday aspects of sport and recreation. Do we compensate the individuation and hyper-specialisation of contemporary existence through the symbolic unity offered by sports clubs, teams, and mass recreational events?

Many artistic and recreational activities share that the purpose of doing them is found in the act of actually doing them, rendering them both autotelic. But what is the place of art in relationships between work and recreation? Perhaps, if we

reduce recreation to something necessary only to recharge before returning to work, we might ignore the value that non-work activities bring to our lives. Although not evenly distributed, perhaps recreation is simply what makes the rest of life feel meaningful.

Artists

Andrew Barber lives and works in Aotearoa/New Zealand. His painting-based practice is connected to an interest in light as both subject matter and influence. For this exhibition, Barber reconfigures the tennis court to metaphorically emphasise inequalities.

Sophia Cai is a curator and writer based in Narrm/Melbourne. Together with Asian art histories, art and craft, feminism and community-building, Cai explores connections between fandom and curating as practices rooted in care and devotion. She is a #casualfan of the K-pop mega group BTS, and for this exhibition presents her personal memorabilia.

Jon Campbell was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland and moved to Melbourne as a child. Exhibiting prolifically since the mid-1980s, his contributions to this exhibition explore vernacular Australian sporting tropes in AFL and surfing. Campbell is represented by Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney.

Judy Dalton & Cūrā8. Dalton is a former world class tennis player with nine major doubles titles and a career Grand Slam in women's doubles. In 1968, she reached the final at Wimbledon, where she lost to Billie Jean King in two close sets. For this exhibition, Dalton reflects upon her contributions to women's sport in a special collaboration with Cūrā8.

Shaun Gladwell engages personal experience and art history by transposing urban expressions such as skateboarding, graffiti, BMX bicycle riding, break-dancing and extreme sports. For this exhibition, he presents a rideable 1:1 scale replica of Duchamp's 1913 *Bicycle Wheel*, and a 360 virtual reality video of a person riding it. Gladwell is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Isabella Hone-Saunders is a curator, arts worker and artist concerned with accessibility, representation and shared social responsibility. For this exhibition, they explore muscular bodybuilding culture through a queer lens.

Sarah Rudledge is a Narm/Melbourne-based artist who explores daily rituals and actions for reimagining lived experience. For this exhibition, she enquires into the peculiarities of recreational waterparks, where parts of the natural world are selectively recruited for recreational consumption.

Nick Selenitsch explores play in the formation of understanding. The works presented for this exhibition mingle co-existing subjects and symbols such as sport, leisure and abstraction with an antipodean twist: a contemplation of laconically hybrid Australian cultural experience. Selenitsch is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.

Mark Shorter is a Melbourne-based artist working across sculpture, painting, installation, video and performance. For this exhibition, Shorter performatively connects childhood experiences of tennis training with his ongoing interest in endurance performance.

Peixuan Yang was born in Raoping, Guangdong, China in 1967 and is a member of the China Artists Association and the Guangdong Artists Association. The exquisite calligraphic portraits presented for this exhibition are representative of vernacular leisure activities in contemporary China.

Anne Zahalka is one of Australia's most highly regarded photo-media artists. Her work explores cultural and gendered stereotyping with a humorous and critical voice. Zahalka is represented by ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne and is currently preparing for a survey exhibition at Monash Gallery of Art.

About Project8

Project8 is a contemporary art space in Melbourne's CBD dedicated to promoting speculative poetic and material innovation through exhibitions and related events. It utilises the multimodal aesthetic languages of contemporary art to experientially deemphasise differences and contestations grounded in language, politics and culture. Project8 is committed to the promotion and development of discursive exchange, collaboration and partnerships between Australian, Chinese and international artists, researchers and communities actively engaging with contemporary art.

CONTACT

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11am—6pm
Wednesday—Saturday
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More information

www.project8.gallery

Instagram and Facebook @project8gallery

Press and additional promotional images contact Honi Ryan: honi@hedonics.com.au



Shaun Gladwell, *Reversed Readymade*, 2016. 360 virtual reality video. Cinematographer: Joseph Heks. Performer: Simon O'Brien. Producer: Leo Faber/BADFAITH. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery.