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Books

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Videos

Horoscope

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Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno
still from *Zidane: A 21st-Century Portrait*
2006
courtesy Friedrich Petzel Gallery



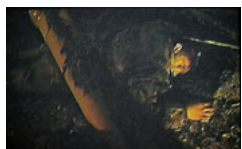
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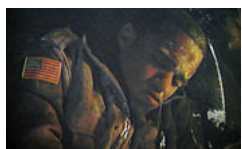
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Chris Moukarbel
still from *Untitled*
2006
WallSpace



Chris Moukarbel
still from *Untitled*
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WEEKEND UPDATE

by Walter Robinson

Sports are not what you'd call a bohemian pastime. Athletes follow rules, beatniks scorn them. Sports speak to the crowd, art to the individual. Sports fans are fanatics, art lovers are blasé. Fans are followers, artists intrepid explorers. Jocks are dumb brutes with uncanny skills, while artists are . . . whatever, you get the idea.

Being a fan demands such abject devotion that it hardly seems possible for an artist to make "sports art" of any quality, and yet here we are, with a nice example of just that made by couple of top contemporary artists.

The artwork in question is *Zidane: A 21st-Century Portrait* (2006), a 90-minute-long feature film by **Philippe Parreno** and **Douglas Gordon** devoted to the French soccer player **Zinedine Zidane**. Three years in the making, the film premiered at Cannes and played to an art crowd in Basel this June at the **Herzog & de Meuron**-designed **St. Jakob Stadium** during **Art 37 Basel**.

Filmed by 17 camera operators at a regular soccer game (Real Madrid vs. Villarreal, Apr. 23, 2005), *Zidane* is no highlight reel. The artists had their cameras trained exclusively on the titular star, following the actor, rather than the action. With the camera focused on Zidane alone, we don't get much of the game's drama. The soccer icon says little and seems to do even less. Clearly, soccer is a team sport, in which any one player has possession of the ball for only moments at a time.

The film is, as promised, a portrait, an extended meditation on a single man. And Zidane is handsome, no question about that.

At Basel, while the soccer fans in the audience were happy as clams -- an hour-and-a-half of staring at your hero isn't too much for a typical sports buff -- a steady stream of viewers exited early, looking somewhat irritated. (This all made me think of **Jacques Rivette's** four-hour-long 1990 film *La Belle Noiseuse*, which demands that cineastes watch **Emmanuelle Beart** pose nude for substantial amounts of time -- which seems to fly past.) In the end, *Zidane* is a typical art production -- counter-intuitively made, elliptical, repetitive and rather dull.

As is often enough the case with avant-garde art, the quality of the appreciation here depends largely on what the viewer brings to the work.

Not that *Zidane* doesn't have a narrative arc. For those who manage to stay till the end, the film has a dramatic conclusion, as Zidane gets a red card and is sent off (that is, he commits a foul and is ejected from the game). Since the soccer genius knew he was being filmed during what was apparently a minor contest, some wonder whether he consciously gave the movie its climax.

In any case, the art film turned out to be a strange portent of real life, when the soccer **2006 World Cup** final was played on Sunday afternoon on July 9, 2006 -- Italy won, but only after Zidane had again been sent off in the last minutes for headbutting an opposing player, the Italian **Marco Materazzi**. Despite the similar ending, the World Cup final was not an artwork but a sports event, and so was actually exciting to watch.

Zidane exists as a movie and as an artwork in an edition of 17. The artwork has a double picture, one side consisting of the portrait film and the other half being one of the 17 original camera feeds. It hasn't been exhibited yet -- some decisions remain as to the soundtrack, a space-age affair by the Glasgow band **Mogwai** -- but several copies have been sold for \$200,000 each. The **Guggenheim Museum**, the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery**, **MUSAC** in León and the **Maya Hoffman Foundation** have acquired the artwork, and the **Museum of Modern Art** is purchasing the feature film for its archives.

* * *

The summer's other art-film sensation comes to us from the world of Hollywood movies. The story broke first in magazines like *Entertainment Weekly* and *Premiere*, which reported that **Paramount Pictures** had filed suit against



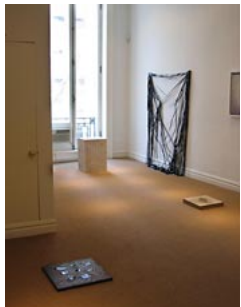
Chris Moukarbel
still from *Untitled*
2006
Wallspace



Dora Garcia
All the Stories
2005
Wallspace



Joe Scanlan's *Pay Dirt* (2002), on view in the Wallspace office



"William Anastasi: Works from the '60s to the Present" at Björn Ressle Fine Art, installation view, with (from left) *Sink* (1963), *Untitled* (1964), *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* (1965) and *Relief* (1961)



Munro Galloway's "Green River" at Murray Guy, installation view

Yale art school grad **Chris Moukarbel** for copyright infringement. The artist had used a purloined script to make a brief home-video version of a scene from **Oliver Stone's** forthcoming wannabe blockbuster, *World Trade Center*, and released it on the web. Moukarbel used Stone's dialogue, but shot his film in his living room using student actors and props scrounged from the street.

Manhattan movie houses are already showing the trailer for Stone's film, which opens Aug. 9 and stars **Nicolas Cage** and actor **Michael Peña** as two Port Authority cops who were trapped in the wreckage of the World Trade Center for 22 hours. Stone's footage is faintly ridiculous, with the hammy Cage emoting while pretending to be pinned under a pile of bricks, in a latter-day version of *Ace in the Hole*, the 1951 **Kirk Douglas** mine-collapse tale.

Moukarbel's film is now nowhere to be seen -- he has been enjoined from showing it by a Washington, D.C. federal court, at the request of Paramount -- but outtakes from his production are on view, legally, in an exhibition at **Wallspace** gallery on West 27th Street in Chelsea. The scant 11 minutes of footage show a young man in some kind of uniform, a flag patch on his jacket shoulder, covered with dirt and dust and lying in what seems to be a dark, rubble-strewn basement. There's no dialogue; the actor is prepping for his scenes, and the bits of footage are random and unedited.

Through some kind of weird esthetic inversion, the outtakes from Moukarbel's film have more emotional authenticity than the scene from Stone's phony movie.

Moukarbel's film seems to be a fairly straightforward copyright violation, but his "fair use" excuse is one of political commentary -- the artist is objecting to the appropriation of the 9/11 tragedy for profit by Stone and Paramount, which have already begun the film's \$40-million marketing campaign. Earlier this month, **Gerry Rich**, Paramount's worldwide marketing chief (who contributed an affidavit to the suit against Moukarbel), solemnly told the *New York Times* how carefully the studio was promoting its new product. He has brilliantly gained worldwide hype for *World Trade Center* by providing advance screenings of the movie for New York City police and firefighters.

The Wallspace exhibition, titled "Data Mining," is organized by artist **Joe Scanlan** and includes works by eight artists that have some relation to the notion of the "index," whether it is **Dora Garcia's** masterful *All the Stories*, a thick book of one- or two-sentence story synopses; a commercially produced rug based on the design of a **Gerhard Richter** color-chip painting; or the voice of **Robert Smithson** describing how to make *Asphalt Rundown*, taken from a rare "sound art" recording made in 1969 and since found on **eBay**.

Scanlan himself, who is an artist (he used to show with **D'Amelio Terras**), a professor (he teaches sculpture at **Yale**) and a curator (formerly assistant director at the **Renaissance Society** in Chicago), is present via a self-portrait in the back room, a fairly widely circulated color photograph in which he poses wearing an insanely broad grin on his face, which is covered with shmutz. The picture is titled *Pay Dirt* (2002). Scanlan also has his own website, at www.thingsthatfall.com, where you can buy, among other things, a set of six *Catalyst Acrylic Tears*, for use at those times that "you want to give the appearance of having feelings." The price is \$20.

* * *

The work of 73-year-old former bricklayer and 1960s-era Conceptual Art pioneer **William Anastasi**, who had four exhibitions at the famous **Dwan Gallery** in New York during 1966-70, is now the subject of a concentrated survey at **Björn Ressle Fine Art** on East 79th Street. Spare and elegant, Anastasi's art pretty much speaks for itself, as much '60s conceptualism does now that four decades have passed. A work called *Sink* (1963) is a thick, 19-inch-square slab of steel, covered with a puddle of water every day, which evaporates leaving rust in its wake (it's owned by the **John Cage Estate**, appropriately enough).

Another emblematic Anastasi work, *Untitled (En route)* (1964), consists of 112 concrete bricks in a rectangular stack, while *Beethoven's 5th Symphony* (1965-2005), is a video performance of the music, unspooled and hung on the wall as if it were a picture. Both works are produced in editions of three; the sculpture is \$75,000, while the symphony is \$40,000. A series of drawings made by holding pencils in both hands against sheets of paper while riding the subway, titled *Subway Drawings* (1993-2006), are perfect recordings of the random everyday. They're \$7,500 each.

* * *

I loved **Munro Galloway's** exhibition at **Murray Guy** back in May, a floor-to-ceiling group of small paintings on paper made like a diary, each picture depicting some scene from real life, done partly in town and partly on a road trip out west. They have the sinuous line and flat colors of Art



Michael Heizer stone sculptures at PaceWildenstein on West 22nd Street



Dawn Mellor's Portrait of Linda Blair at Team Gallery



Dana Hoey, and kids, at her booksigning at Friedrich Petzel Gallery



One of Adam Morosky's Virgin Mary grilled cheese sandwiches at Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts



Nancy Rubins
Big Pleasure Point

Nouveau, but today might be more likely thought to resemble the lapidary style of **Peter Doig**, or perhaps the brushy lyricism of **Fairfield Porter**. It's a vision of painting that is humble, versatile and carefree to the extent that it's almost an anti-esthetic. The works are \$2,500 each, with discounts for quantity purchases.

I couldn't help but love **Michael Heizer's** large-scale versions of Paleolithic and Neolithic tools, sculptures ranging in size from five feet long to over 16 feet in length, made of pigmented concrete mounted on steel bases and now on view as a group for the first time at **PaceWildenstein** on West 22nd Street. Dating from 1988-89, the works seem to suggest that Minimalism's roots are in prehistory, not industry, and also prove that context is everything -- send an artist out to the Western wilderness, and you get a primitivist and ancient esthetic (Heizer lives in Nevada, where he has been building a sculptural complex titled *City* since 1970). Prices start at about \$125,000.

Gotta love also English artist **Dawn Mellor's** show of monstrously offensive paintings at **Team Gallery** in May and June, violent and obscene parodies of celebrity culture such as, for instance, a mural-sized painting of seven young female stars in shit-stained orgy in front of a giant U.S. flag, on which "LOVE" has apparently been smeared fingerpaint-style. Especially good is Mellor's repellent painterly technique, whose ugliness is justified by her subjects. My favorite: the small painting in the front office of **Linda Blair**, as possessed by the devil in *The Exorcist*, wearing an "I ♥ NY" t-shirt. It's \$6,000. Mellor shows in London with **Victoria Miro**.

I always loved **Dana Hoey** for her photographs of hippie girls gone wrong, like her [picture](#) of a tattooed woman tending a crystal meth lab, or a pregnant woman smoking. Last month at **Friedrich Petzel** she showed a group of new photos of earth mothers and wise old women clipped and laid out in patterns like quilts. The installation was being offered as a unit, Hoey said, but the 30 photos are also published in a new book, with text by **Gretchen Rubin**, titled *Profane Waste*, for \$35.

And I had to love **Adam Morosky's** idea to sell grilled cheese sandwiches at the opening of "Anything U Can Do, I Can Do Better," organized by **Anat Ebgi** to inaugurate the grand new fifth-floor space of **Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts** at the Chelsea Arts Building at 526 West 26th Street. They weren't just any grilled cheese -- they had the image of the **Virgin Mary** visible in their golden crusts. Now that's real Wonder Bread! Morosky was selling the sandwiches for \$1 each.

"Anything U Can Do" features works by about 20 artists, all grads of the BFA program at the **New York State College of Ceramics** at **Alfred University** in Alfred, N.Y., which is headed by my old pal from **Fashion Moda**, **Joe Lewis**. A show of Alfred U's MFA grads opens on July 20, 2006, at three Chelsea galleries -- **Florence Lynch Gallery**, **J. Cacciola Gallery** and **Lohin Geduld Gallery**.

And if you really love **Nancy Rubins'** installation up on the plaza of **Lincoln Center**, a gargantuan corsage of brightly colored aluminum boats, on view all summer courtesy the **Public Art Fund**, you can pick up a collage-version of the work down at the **Paul Kasmin Gallery** in Chelsea. The price? \$18,000.

WALTER ROBINSON is editor of *Artnet Magazine*. He can be reached at wrobinson@artnet.com

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