

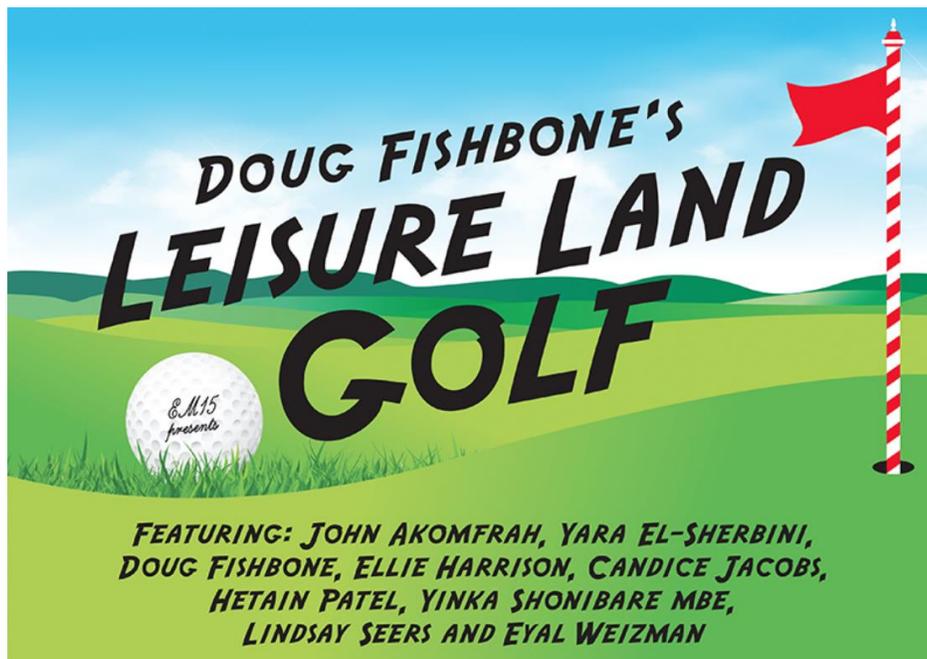
EM15



East Midlands debut at Venice Biennale 2015

Play a round of mini golf at Venice Biennale

6 May – 26 July 2015



The EM15 partnership invites you to tee off at the Venice Biennale this year with *Doug Fishbone's Leisure Land Golf*, a fully playable mini golf course for which nine artists have each been commissioned to design a hole.

EM15 is a new partnership between artist-led organisations and institutions from the East Midlands, UK: New Art Exchange, QUAD, One Thoresby Street, Beacon Art Project and the academic partner Nottingham Trent University, with digital engagement support from the University of Nottingham.

Mini, or crazy golf, as it is sometimes known, with its comical miniature obstacle courses and associations with tacky seaside holidays, sits strangely comfortably in the modern Venetian cityscape, which attracts a mix of well-heeled and mass-market holiday-makers and cultural adventurers: a water-side tourist trap spilling over with baubles; a city bursting with unparalleled cultural riches.

Doug Fishbone's course invites the artists to respond to 'The Leisure Principle', where consumer satisfaction is prioritised at all costs. Each of the holes can be read as an autonomous work, but by playing a round and immersing oneself in the game, one can experience a coherent and at times disturbing sense of a world (mis)shaped by our consumer habits and desires.

Alongside *Leisure Land Golf*, EM15 has commissioned *Sunscreen* (www.sun-screen.uk), an online project by artist Candice Jacobs that includes the work of 40 artists invited by Jacobs and the EM15 partnership. Artists have been invited to create new digital works in response to 'The Leisure Principle', each of which is distributed as a free downloadable screensaver. *Sunscreen* uses the screen and the online space as a form of conversation between the individual (consumers), the collective (producers) and the state (economy), and considers our relationship with consumption, experience, distribution and exchange via an ongoing collection of 40 digital artworks as screensavers, created by artists with a connection to the East Midlands.

Speaking for EM15, Skinder Hundal, CEO of New Art Exchange and Executive Producer of EM15, says 'the concept of tourism and trade sits at the heart of these projects, giving us a platform from which to explore current global economic complexities through one of the defining principles of leisure, that of consumption and how this consumption shapes our identity.'

Doug Fishbone's Leisure Land Golf participating artists and their golf holes:

John Akomfrah examines the mediated images of death, in particular of unarmed African Americans shot by police in the United States in recent years, where the hoodie, the ubiquitous costume of the disenfranchised youth, becomes a threat to the status quo.

Globalisation has ostensibly opened up borders but some boundaries remain inflexible and ironclad. **Yara El-Sherbini** replicates various aspects of the day-to-day reality within territories under occupation, exploring separation barriers as an historical and universal means to control and limit the movement of people worldwide.

Doug Fishbone presents a model of the wreck of the Costa Concordia, which was driven onto the rocks off the coast of Italy by its captain in 2012. Like few other symbols, the cruise ship embodies the contradictions of capitalism - class divisions and reckless leadership, indifference to its workers, disregard of the environment, the hidden price tag for a few days of fun in the sun.

As the final hole, **Ellie Harrison's** *Life Raft* – a scale map of the UK floating in the adjacent canal – offers a safe haven to immigrant golf balls that can make the treacherous crossing. In a typically playful way, Harrison's work hints towards a somewhat darker time in the future, when the continued rise in global temperatures creates a vast number of "climate refugees" desperate to escape to more temperate climes; a future which will likely make the current animosity towards immigrants being witnessed across Europe, seem trivial.

Candice Jacobs explores the meaninglessness of aspiration within cognitive capital frameworks. Making reference to the seductive use of capital and gender in popular television game shows, Jacobs questions whether our habitual behavioural patterns can be influenced by television programming and the internet, to make us vulnerable to exploitation by global markets and governments.

Heta Patel's squatting figure exhibits a characteristic posture of India that is only adopted by the working and lower classes. The displacement of this posture to Europe in a game of mini golf - itself a working class leisure activity – frames industrial cultural exchange, specifically production lines involved in import/export.

Lindsay Seers' golf hole for Venice features a figurehead upside down and pregnant being attacked by two enormous snakes. The figure is Princess Salme of Zanzibar, daughter of a Circassian concubine in the Sultan's harem. Salme became pregnant by a German merchant and was smuggled out of Africa by a British sea captain to Europe; subsequently she was used as a pawn by both the British and German's in the carving up of East Africa. The golf ball's journey up a steep ramp, over a painting of an anamorphic British naval captain, finds its way through the snake's bodies. When it is finally spat out, it bounces off a rock painted with an image of a 'Circassian Beauty' from PT Barnum's freak show. You should be able to score a hole in one – you may win, but at what price?

Yinka Shonibare MBE explores the complexity of contemporary African identity and power relations between the West and Africa. The football pitch becomes a site for the struggle for economic survival, played out by the African football player for both himself and his team. This explosive tension is represented by a mushroom cloud of footballs decorated with Shonibare's signature African textiles.

Eyal Weizman presents an abstracted scale model of Kaliningrad, formerly known as Königsberg, a city in Russia connected by seven bridges over the River Pregel. The aim of the game, based on the famed mathematical conundrum of the Seven Bridges of Königsberg, is to return to your starting point by playing the ball across each bridge once only, a seemingly impossible task. The problem was unwittingly solved by RAF bombers during the last months of WWII, who made the route navigable by demolishing two of the original bridges.

For further information about EM15 contact Kirsty Young, Marketing and Communications Manager, New Art Exchange kirsty@nae.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

EM15 www.em15venice.co.uk

EM15 is a new partnership between artist-led organisations and institutions from the East Midlands, UK;: New Art Exchange, QUAD, One Thoresby Street, Beacon Art Project and the academic partner Nottingham Trent University (www.ntu.ac.uk), with digital engagement support from the University of Nottingham (www.nottingham.ac.uk).

EM15 Curatorial Team

Peter Bonnell (QUAD www.derbyquad.co.uk), Louise Clements (QUAD www.derbyquad.co.uk), Skinder Hundal (New Art Exchange www.nae.org.uk), Candice Jacobs (One Thoresby Street www.onethoresbystreet.org), Melanie Kidd (New Art Exchange www.nae.org.uk), John Plowman (Beacon Art Project www.beaconartproject.org)

EM15 Venue

40, Castello. 30122 - Venice

Use the GPS location 45°25'58.6"N 12°21'32.0"E to find the venue on google maps.

Please note you need to cross the Fondamenta Sant'Anna bridge to reach the EM15 venue. EM15 is adjacent to the pavilions of Bahrain and Catalonia.

Previews and Opening Times:

Previews for Press and Arts Professionals: Wednesday 6th May - Friday 8th May 2015

Launch event: Thursday 7th May 2015, 5 - 7pm

Open to the public: Saturday 9th May 2015 – Sunday 26th July 2015

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 6pm (closed Mondays)