



PRESS RELEASE

Contemporary Art at the Mini-Golf Course

Ten leading voices from the contemporary art world feature in an extraordinary show - an exhibition which is also a fully playable, miniature golf course. **Doug Fishbone's Leisure Land Golf**, which debuted within the East Midlands' premiere pavilion at the Venice Biennale #56, lands in Nottingham this April at **New Art Exchange**, the Executive Producers of the installation.

Leisure Land Golf invites visitors to participate in the enjoyable leisure activity of crazy golf. Yet, there is more than meets the eye, as **Doug Fishbone** - an artist and trickster, known for his humorous forms of institutional critique such as installing a fake painting at Dulwich Picture Gallery - uses the fun and accessible game as a powerful tool for questioning the leisure industry. The ten artist-designed putting holes - whilst diverse in their themes and aesthetics - are united in their sculptural brilliance, and their exploration of thought-provoking subject matters. From migration to global warming and globalisation, each hole is a glimpse into a new perspective. By immersing oneself in a game, a new image of the world emerges - tainted by our society's compulsion for consumption.

Explosive tensions between the West and Africa are represented by Turner Prize nominated artist, **Yinka Shonibare MBE**, as a large-scale mushroom cloud of footballs, adorned with Shonibare's signature African textiles, illustrates how the football pitch can be a site for economic struggles.

To score in the hole of **John Akomfrah OBE** one must swing, aim and shoot into the face of a hooded figure, kneeling in surrender. Akomfrah references the number of unarmed African Americans shot by policemen in the United States, where the 'hoodie' is symbolic of disenfranchised youth and a threat to the status quo. **Lindsay Seers'** fantastical twisted sea snake sculpture serves as a metaphor for colonialism, drawing upon the life story of Princess Salma of Zanzibar, who was used as a pawn by Britons and Germans in the carving up of East Africa.

One hole does not allow itself to be conquered - the unsolvable golfing green by **Eyal and Ines Weizman**, based on the famed mathematical conundrum of the Seven Bridges of Königsberg. The bridge arrangement set tourists an impossible challenge in navigating the city, to see if they could cross each bridge without ever retracing their steps. It only became solvable following the demolition of two bridges during RAF bombings in WWII.

Doug Fishbone's own controversial contribution to the course is a model of the wrecked Costa Concordia, driven onto the rocks by its reckless captain in 2012. The cruise ship embodies the contradictions of capitalism - class divisions, indifference to its workers, disregard of the environment- all concealed in offering the most luxurious experience to its privileged passengers. As Fishbone explains, *"cruises seem to be a particularly tone deaf response to the world's ills."*

Fishbone's golfing green is a conceptual extension of the mini-golf course, where a leisure activity functions as a distraction from our social reality. The artist explains:

"As a mixture of spectacle and whimsy for an idle, jaded audience, the game seems a fitting distraction for our own era, as we await the next systemic financial collapse – or perhaps, the earth's next extinction level event. However, we can take solace in the realization that the world may be going to hell in hand basket, but with putters in hand, at least we can go down swinging."

Other artists include **Yara El-Sherbini**, who challenges mini-golfers to negotiate hazardous motorised checkpoints, hidden tunnels and catapults. **Ellie Harrison's** Life Raft dares visitors to pitch their ball across the treacherous straits of the English Channel, aiming to score in the UK- a safe haven to immigrant golf balls. **Hetai Patel's** squatting figure exhibits a characteristic posture of India, illustrating how class symbols exist universally.

The exhibition celebrates the artistic talents that have grown from the Midlands region. A brand-new commission by Nottingham's artist collective, **Reactor**, presents a mini-golf course of oversized objects, comically referencing concept of hazards and other unusual objects culturally associated with golf. Meanwhile, **Candice Jacobs** explores the pitfalls of artificially glitzy TV game-shows.

Skinder Hundal, Chief Executive of New Art Exchange, explains the importance of this exhibition as it reaches new audiences.

“We’re delighted to be bringing a Venice Biennale highlight, produced by us to Nottingham- enabling our local communities to be inspired by important issues, and the incredible work of internationally acclaimed artists. We are looking forward to seeing how the artworks take on a new life- stimulating exciting new ideas and conversations.”

Accompanying *Doug Fishbone’s Leisure Land Golf* is a presentation of an online project, *Sunscreen*, conceived by Candice Jacobs. The project invited 40 artists create a new digital artwork, distributed as a free downloadable screensaver, which visitors to the *Sunscreen* website are invited to select and install onto their own work stations for free. *Sunscreen* highlights issues around the distribution and consumption of digital artworks and the space that exists between work and leisure – a space of the subconscious shaping of our tastes, aspirations, desires, notions of escapism and value systems. The artists selected for *Sunscreen* by Jacobs and the EM15 partnership, each have a connection

The exhibition runs until 19 June 2016

Exhibition Details

Launch Event: *Doug Fishbone’s Leisure Land Golf*

1 April 2016, 6pm - 8pm

New Art Exchange, Gregory Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 6BE

Editor Notes

A selection of images can be downloaded from Dropbox: <http://bit.ly/1K7GlbQ>

For further images and to arrange interviews/photo opportunities contact **Laura-Jade Klee**: laurajade@nae.org.uk, 0115 924 8630

About New Art Exchange

New Art Exchange is a contemporary art space committed to stimulating new perspectives on the value of diversity within art and society. A RIBA award winning building, New Art Exchange is the largest space in the UK dedicated to culturally diverse contemporary visual arts, and is rooted in the community with a strong history of working with minority communities. Past exhibitors have included: Zarina Bhimji, John Akomfrah, Rashid Rana, Zineb Sedira, Hurvin Anderson, Nari Ward, Christian Marclay and Elizabeth Price (British Art Show 7), Leo Asemota, Raghu Rai, Tanya Habjouqa, J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere and Hetain Patel. NAE’s mission is to raise the impact, profile and development of culturally diverse contemporary visual arts and artists in a global context by: nurturing and promoting creative talent locally and worldwide, creating thriving creative businesses, and engaging minority ethnic communities as audiences and patrons of art.

New Art Exchange receives support from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. The original commissioning of the work for the 2015 Venice Biennale was supported by Arts Council.

EM15

Doug Fishbone’s Leisure Land Golf was commissioned by EM15, a collective of arts organisations from the East Midlands. With New Art Exchange as the Executive Producer, EM15 also comprises of QUAD (Derby), One Thoresby Street (Nottingham) and Beacon Art Project (Lincolnshire) with support from Nottingham Trent University and The University of Nottingham. <http://em15venice.co.uk>

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is an online project conceived by artist and co-founder of One Thoresby Street, Candice Jacobs. A commission by EM15 for the 56th Venice Biennale. <http://sun-screen.uk>

The Grand Tour

Reactor’s hole was commissioned by The Grand Tour. The Grand Tour reinterprets world class collections through contemporary art at four venues in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, with a fringe programme at other leading venues across the two regions. Season two, 17 March – 26 June 2016.