

## **The games of art: The art of games**

In *Walls to the Ball*, artist Hazel Meyer weaves a social net that catches the invisible assumptions of art and athletics, and renders them visible. Both the production and display illuminate the difficulty in differentiating between these two categories in Meyer's piece. In the production, Meyer crafts basketball nets, guided by local Newfoundland traditions of hand-knotting. Similar to the skill and practice required of athletes, this process is labour-intensive, and highlights the importance of the body and dexterity to artistic production, a physicality largely ignored in the history of art. In the exhibition, Meyer makes a basketball-like court with her crafted nets, generating a symbiosis of art and athletics. She invites people to interact with the work and to dictate the rules of their engagement. By redrawing the gallery as an athletic centre, Meyer creates a hybrid space where the lines between art and athletics are blurred.

Meyer's piece uses play techniques to engage participants in rereading the conventional assumptions tied to art and athletics. The playful manner in which she unpacks these categories, however, does not mask the socio-historical value of this project. By fabricating a space where art is athletics and athletics are art, Meyer also provides a vehicle to question the assumptions of gender, bodies, and participation that underlie the categories of art and athletics. The work forces gallery-goers-athletes to ask: Who is included as a participant in the histories of art and sport? Who is excluded? How? Why? Inviting any-bodies, and every-bodies to participate in her events of art-athletics, Meyer negotiates the exclusionary boundaries that have been a part of the histories of both art and athletics, and nurtures a space of freedom and movement for all.

- Susan Cahill, 2012

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