

## HOMO LUDENS

Ignasi Aballí

Jordi Colomer

Lieven De Boeck

Hreinn Fridfinnsson

Filip Gilissen

Adam Henry

Rinko Kawauchi

Nicolás Lamas

Bruce Nauman

Sarah Ortmeier

Benoît Pype

Evariste Richer

Kelly Schacht

Maarten Vanden Eynde

Leon Vranken

November 7 – December 6, 2014

The exhibition's title *Homo Ludens*, which could be translated by 'man who plays', finds its origin in an essay published by Dutch author J. Huizinga demonstrating the importance of the game in the development of civilization. The diversity of games makes it difficult to clearly define the subject, but Huizinga makes a quite good summary: "Play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that is 'different' from ordinary life". Games and elements of games have been used by numerous artists, so choosing works is inevitably reducing. Nevertheless, all the works displayed in this exhibition open fecund ways of reflection, and allow each one to question one's own notion of chance or competition.

*Piet Mondrian Greatest Hits* (1) is the first work the visitor encounters with which he can 'play'. It consists of a melody programmed by artist **Benoît Pype** who reproduced famous canvases Mondrian painted between 1919 and 1944 on music paper. On each orthogonal intersection the artist perforated the cardboard belt in order to compose a melody, audible when activating a crank handle. Mondrian's abstraction is not the one radiating the most fantasy but it is reformatted here, and seems to suddenly gain in sensitivity and humour. Art history can be translated in popular music as popular tradition can feed artistic reflection.

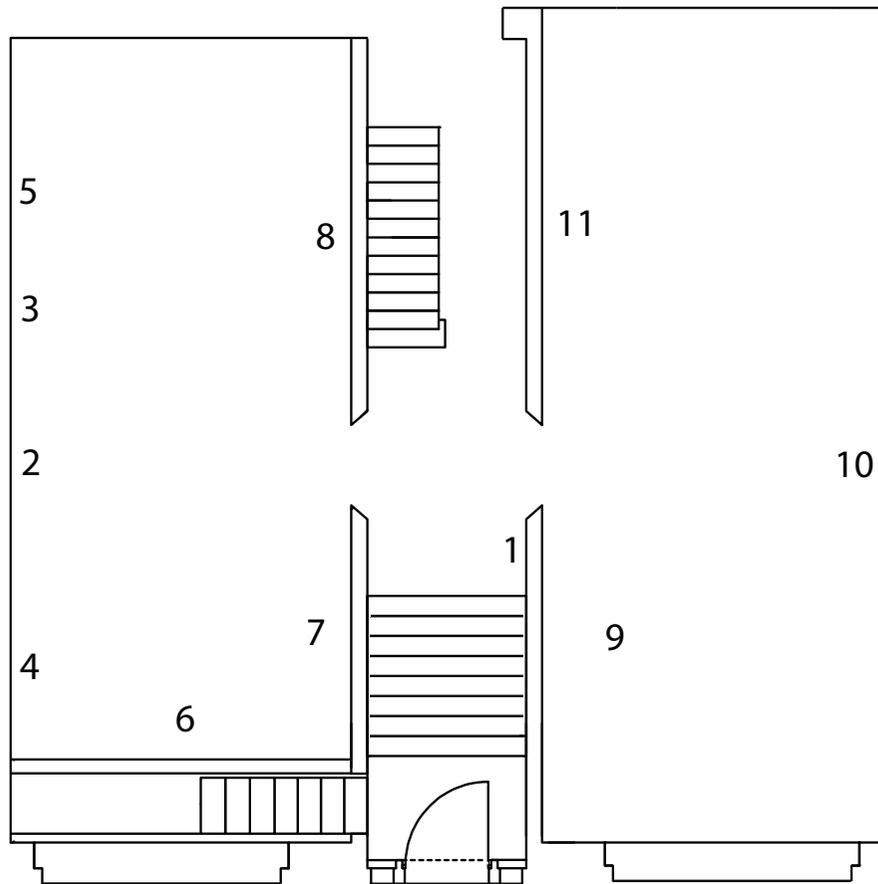
Thus, in the left-hand room, a large horizontal work by **Evariste Richer** (2) resonates with Mondrian's almost mathematical grid. It is an enlarged American lottery ticket, cleaned of all annotations. The artists conserved no more than the original colours and lay out of the game grid. It makes us think of architecture in its rigor an organization. The artist confronts the randomness of the lottery to the rigidity of the grid responding to strict rules. Money and chance games are in some way opposite to the world of labour. Values transmitted by labour are simply evacuated in game systems (enrichment without any constraints). But it is interesting to note that in our contemporary societies, the relation between culture and chance games is so narrow that many national lotteries massively subsidize cultural programs. Nailed to the wall, a silver coin (3) refers to the line in *Moby Dick* in which Captain Achab promises the coin he is nailing to the ship's mast to the first sailor who detects the famous white whale. Does this work by **Jorge Méndez Blake** suggest that, in this exhibition, the white whale represents the jackpot? That lot that every player dreams of winning, but has very little chance to win effectively. Luck is dominant in every game. That is what **Ignasi Aballí's** *Listados%* (4) evokes in an indirect way. The artists compiled paper clippings from the newspaper *El País* on two A4 sheets, representing percentages potentially referring to probabilities. Playing holds the possibility to win. The audacious acquirer of *One Day I will make a work for you* (5) by **Maarten Vanden Eynde** knows he buys a work but does not know precisely which one. The artist went to a notary in order to legalize a promise of work for a future client that he does not know yet. The acquisition of the work, combined with the meeting of two protagonists will allow a work to exist in the future. The video *Play Patience* (6) by **Kelly Schacht** deals with the temporal problem from a different point of view. The artist combined on the same screen a video extracted from a BBC documentary with a video in which a person is playing Patience with nothing but jokers. The BBC documentary describes the life of a man that almost instantly loses memory. He forgets every action so quickly, forcing him to constantly use a notebook in which he notes all his thoughts and actions, as well as the card game he constantly plays. Does patience kill time? The neon hung on the wall (7) is also by Kelly Schacht and refers to emptiness of forgetting as much as to all sentences that can be potentially expressed. The unknown, the hidden are integral part of games. The 32 cards that **Evariste Richer** patiently drew by hand (8), do not allow the viewer to see which card is concerned. Made with ink, meticulously they are all identical, all different.

In the right-hand room, **Lieven De Boek** installed his *Série bleue* (9) on pedestals; several replications of Lego blocks in blue glass are precisely arranged according to the mathematical Fibonacci suite. All these blocks that have animated and animate many children worldwide are here made of rolled glass. The artist relates each assemblage to his own identity (such as his iris, fingerprint, signature, flag, reference meter). **Nicolás Lamas** displays five works from the series *Blind Gestures* (10). Each photograph is derived from scanning the screen of an iPad in standby mode. One can notice fingerprints, marks and dust accumulated on the screen surface, all which seems random but actually reflects logical actions related to one's use of the tablet. **Bruce Nauman's** monotype *Fingers and holes* (11) shows an endless circle, the repetitiveness of an action in a game while playfully formalizing the realization process: the artist engraved his left hand with his right hand and vice-versa.

On the first floor, **Filip Gilissen** welcomes the visitor with *The No Problem Show* (12), a neon work intermittently showing that the wave of a magic wand can make a dove appear. Little nod revealing the importance of mystification in many games. In the left-hand room a photograph by **Rinko Kawauchi** (13) shows a little girl climbing the slope of a toboggan to reach, arguably, in a metaphorical way the heart or the source of everything. With *Billiard balls* (14), **Nicolás Lamas** plays with the notions inside and outside, geometry and hidden beauty. The artist abraded sixteen billiard balls to reveal their internal structure. *Urban Impressions* (15) by **Hreinn Fridfinnsson** assembles disparate parts of urban landscape, like impressionist painters, by juxtaposing small touches. Trial and error progress, even stray, appear with **Adam Henry**, whose painting on jute canvas (16) is based on the use of five colours. The labyrinthine path is somewhat reminiscent of the famous 80's electronic game... In the passage, *Setup* (17) by **Nicolás Lamas** questions the impossibility of playing. On a wooden chessboard the artist placed a sphere made of the 32 chess pieces compressed.

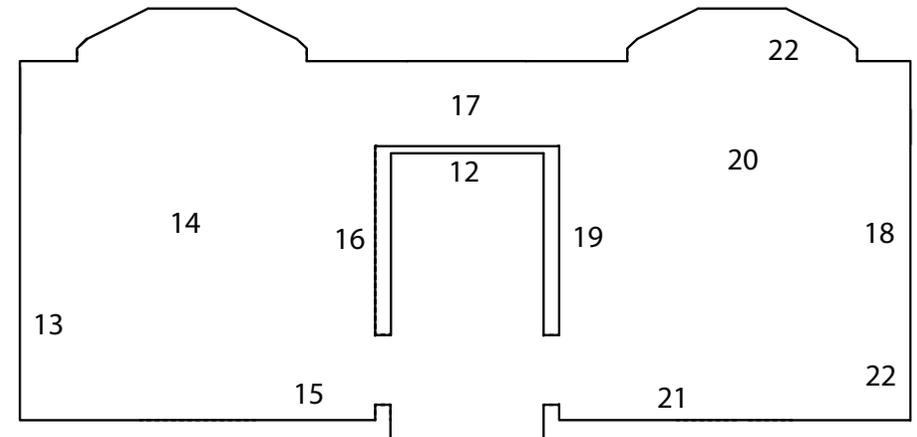
In the right-hand room, *Demostrar* (18) by **Ignasi Aballí** is a work consisting of details from photographs showing laureates brandishing a trophy. How to show the act of showing itself? In a different way, **Jordi Colomer** asks the same question with *Arabian Stars* (19), in a series of works made in Yemen. He asked natives to adopt a demonstrator's posture and to brandish banners with their stars' names written in Arabic: here French football star Zinedine Zidane. While staging an absurd situation that cancels the idea of protestation, Colomer questions the clash between two cultures. In the centre of the room one can see *The World unmade* (20) by **Lieven De Boeck** takes the shape of a ball, used in sport medicine for muscle reinforcement. The artist represents the world with tipp-ex, in a paradoxical gesture obliterating it while representing it. The place of the Earth seems to completely disappear in *Eclipse* (21) by **Evariste Richer** consisting of two weights used in the Olympic discipline of hammer throw-shot. By assembling the objects this way, a golden and a silver one, the artist refers to solar and lunar heavenly bodies which are in constant interaction and convoke phenomena of gravity or 'cosmic chance'. Settled as placid witnesses, the two works *Magnus Magnet* (22) by **Sarah Ortmeier** are two chessboard handbooks which bookmarks are table-tennis balls. In the wunderkammer, **Leon Vranken** presents a work consisting of twelve wooden pieces (23), all handmade, referring to strategic games combining reflexion and patience, knowledge and perseverance. All different, we do not know anymore if they are pawns becoming columns or columns becoming pawns. Heads or tails?

LEVEL 0

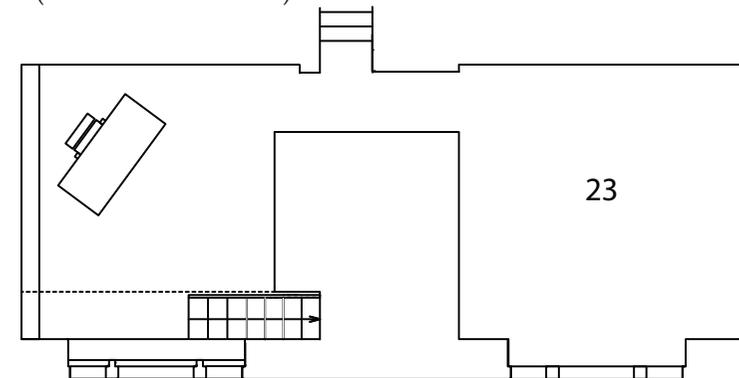


1. Benoît Pype, *Piet Mondrian Greatest Hits*, 2011
2. Evariste Richer, *We never know (Numbers)*, 2014
3. Jorge Méndez Blake, *Whosoever of ye Raises me a White-headed Whale*, 2004
4. Ignasi Aballí, *Listados %*, 1998-2012
5. Maarten Vanden Eynde, *One Day I will make a work for you*, 2014
6. Kelly Schacht, *Play Patience*, 2010
7. Kelly Schacht, “ “”, 2011
8. Evariste Richer, *Cartes à jouer*, 2010
9. Lieven De Boeck, *Série bleue*, 2014
10. Nicolás Lamas, *Blind Gestures*, 2014
11. Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (fingers and holes)*, 1994

LEVEL 1



LEVEL -1 (WUNDERKAMMER)



12. Filip Gilissen, *The No Problem Show*, 2013
13. Rinko Kawauchi, *Untitled (058)*, 2001
14. Nicolás Lamas, *Billiard Balls*, 2014
15. Hreinn Fridfinnsson, *Urban impressions*, 2011
16. Adam Henry, *Untitled (3pthpt)*, 2013
17. Nicolás Lamas, *Setup*, 2014
18. Ignasi Aballí, *Demostrar*, 2005-2008
19. Jordi Colomer, *Arabian Stars*, 2005
20. Lieven De Boeck, *The World unmade*, 2012
21. Evariste Richer, *L'éclipse*, 2014
22. Sarah Ortmeyer, *Magnus Magnet*, 2014
23. Leon Vranken, *Untitled*, 2011