

DOUBLE PLAY

University Art Museum
Collections Study Space

June 28 –
December 7, 2019



DOUBLE PLAY

Curated by Max Seiler, Milton and Sally Avery Arts
Foundation Intern, 2019

Double Play highlights work from the University at Albany Fine Art Collections, showcasing the various ways artists have used sports as a visual element in their work. Presented alongside *ACE: art on sports, promise, and selfhood* in the museum's main gallery, *Double Play* includes work by Kyle Avery, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Andreas Feininger, Mary Ellen Mark, Joel Meyerowitz, Helmut Newton, Ry Rocklen, Mark Rucker, Neal Slavin, Andy Warhol, and Allen Yates. Each artist explores sports in a variety of ways including, for instance, portraits of athletes; various expressions of masculinity and gender; design and patterning specific to athletics; and themes of victory and sacrifice. Art and sports may seem at first worlds apart, but they have many areas of visual and conceptual overlap. Just as artists explore themes of gender, sexuality, historiography, and beyond, sports are a perfect gateway to talk about the same issues. Issues like Title IX, pay discrimination between genders, or racism among some sports fans are all topics related to athletics, but at the core of each is a concept that can be universally applied to other parts of society. Art is a perfect medium to understand and deconstruct these issues within sports.



Double Play: Curated by Max Seiler, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation Intern, 2019, installation view, Collections Study Space, University Art Museum

Double Play Artists

Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Jon Gould

As part of the Athlete Series, Andy Warhol was commissioned by notable art collector Richard Weisman to paint portraits of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Muhammad Ali, Chris Evert, Rod Gilbert, Dorothy Hamill, Jack Nicklaus, Pelé, Tom Seaver, Willie Shoemaker, and O.J. Simpson. Weisman wanted to bring the worlds of art and sports together to understand their connections and attract new audiences to each area. Each athlete was also photographed extensively throughout the sitting process. Warhol understood that the landscape of celebrity was changing in America to include sports superstars, whose cultural significance was ever growing. Abdul-Jabbar embodies this world by inventing the “sky hook” and leading the Los Angeles Lakers to multiple NBA championships, but also by boycotting the 1968 Olympic Team in response to America’s discriminatory treatment of African-Americans. He additionally changed his name from Lew Alcindor to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar after converting to Islam, a public move that would see him face vast racist and Islamophobic reactions.

Jon Gould, n.d.

Along with the photograph of Abdul-Jabbar, a photograph of Jon Gould, a close friend of Warhol, is also included in this exhibition. Gould was Warhol’s boyfriend in the early 1980s and someone with whom Warhol fell deeply in love. Gould lived a double life, between being a straight Paramount vice president in Los Angeles and seeing Warhol secretly in New York City. Of all the photos taken by Warhol, Gould is the most frequent subject, and through these images, such as the one in the exhibition, we are taken on an intimate journey of Warhol’s everyday goings and the people in his daily routine. Although Gould is simply taking a morning

jog through Central Park, we can understand the love Warhol has for this man as he documents their life together. In 1986 Gould would pass away, from complications related to AIDS, with some scholars writing that his death influenced Warhol’s later work that features male figures along with themes of AIDS, mourning, and forgiveness.

Neal Slavin (b. 1941)

These photographs are from Slavin’s *When Two or More are Gathered Together* series, which includes photographs of groups such as gun clubs, community sports teams, firefighters, and bodybuilders. Slavin has written that this work stems from a memory of an early Boy Scout troop photograph he took, which taught him about the spontaneity of group photography and the individualistic and unique expressions each subject has within a group. Although the subjects are dressed uniformly, each boy is posing in his own way; to Slavin, it represents a performance. Team sports are a constant pull between the individual strengths of players and the need to work as a unit to accomplish the task at hand. Slavin is able to capture the camaraderie of a group, while keeping sight of the individualism that each person possesses.

Kyle Avery (b. 1988) MFA ‘16

Kyle Avery worked on the four collage works for his master’s thesis at University at Albany, gathering about one-hundred source images as a visual codex to make his *Slam Dunk* series. Basketball and its visual language are front and center within Avery’s collages—from the players, the ball itself, the clothing, the court, and basketball strategy patterning. Within *Hoop Dreams* and *Untitled* Avery seems to mimic the lines and arrows drawn on a coach’s clipboard to illustrate a play for their players. Avery cuts his collage materials in *Jay* and *Len* as a way to deconstruct the basketball and the patterning of the hardwood floor of a basketball court. By using collage as his medium, Avery is able to break down and reassemble the building blocks of basketball to create visually intriguing compositions.

Ry Rocklen (b. 1978)

Ry Rocklen has been using trophies as a medium since 2011 when he created *Second to None*, a massive sculpture created out of many sports trophies. Not only attracted to the trophies for their “winning” meaning, Rocklen has collected them for the sparkle and the forms they are molded

into. Rocklen's *Trophy Modern* is a smaller version of his trophy works, commissioned by Peter Norton for his annual Christmas gift series. Trophies have acted as an object that embodies struggle and work and accomplishment within sports, but that have also become overabundant in their dissemination to children for every accomplishment, including simply participation. The duality and changing meaning of trophies heightens their power—even if they are merely a bit of plastic, metal, andwood.

Mary Ellen Mark (1940–2015)

Boy with Lasso comes out of Mary Ellen Mark's deep exploration of America from the perspective of the unfamiliar. Mark took photographs of "children, transvestites, bikers, the elderly, Coney Island, hot tubs, beauty contests, the fat, the skinny, prostitutes, church people, the insane and the imprisoned, Ku Klux Klan members, demonstrators, parades, marathon dancers, the up and the down, the unknown," wrote Grace Glueck in a review of her work in the *New York Times*. These subjects usually seem foreign at first to the vast majority of viewers, but Mark breathes life into them and asks the viewer to try to understand their lives. The boy, his lasso, and the rodeo he is taking part in are aspects of life tucked away in Texas, but symbolize something greater by evoking masculinity, youth, violence, patriotism, and history that all Americans can relate to. Although on the edge of mainstream society, this boy is actually within the greater culture of America.

Allen Yates (b. 1960) MFA '99

In Yates's work the viewer is stuck within a never-ending loop of someone walking on a treadmill. The repeated image subverts any attempt to try to make a narrative out of the piece. Speaking in an interview conducted by Corinna Ripps Schaming, University Art Museum interim director/curator in 2003, Yates reveals this is what he is trying to achieve, "In these short, looping videos, I co-opt the linear nature of the medium to create decidedly non-linear, hypnotic moments outside of time." Although trapped within the repeated walking motion a viewer can leap to isolation; there is also potential for comfort. Actions with repeated patterning, like walking on a treadmill, have the ability to put you in a trance and a state of euphoria similar to the endorphins released when exercising. Yates is able to tap into this within his loops.



Mary Ellen Mark (1940 – 2015) *Boy with Lasso, Texas 7/1991*, 1991, gelatin silver print on paper, 11 x 14 inches

Mark Rucker (b. 1949) MFA '75

Like Kyle Avery, Mark Rucker completed his master's degree at University at Albany, and work for his thesis explored the visual language of baseball. Since graduating in 1975, Rucker has gone on to become the foremost collector and historian on the pictorial history of baseball. He has collected thousands of pieces of ephemera spanning the history of the sport. His expertise has garnered him numerous awards in the sports ephemera world and he was even brought on as the visual consultant for Ken Burn's *Baseball* documentary. Within *Angel Hermosa's Double Play*, Rucker has the viewer relive a controversial slide or barrel roll by Don Baylor into Angel "Remy" Hermosa. While sliding into second base, Baylor knocked out Hermosa, which caused him first to miss the rest of the season and then to rarely play again in Major League Baseball. Along with the story, Rucker also employs a geometric pattern on top of the baseball players that seems to mimic a concussion-like state. Rucker's work is an unfriendly reminder of the dangers of contact sports, concussions, and CTE, which are all now playing out forty years later.

Andreas Feininger (1906–1999)

Feininger was the son of famous Bauhaus painter, Lyonel Feininger, and he took many of his father's Bauhaus ideas into his work. Feininger gained his reputation as a LIFE magazine photographer from 1943 to 1962, but would also work on his own personal practice as well. In his work he wanted to understand natural phenomena and its connection to manmade things. Much of his work emphasizes design, construction, and the way that objects are organized. Through longer exposures and experiments with light, Feininger is able to explore movement within the two photographs exhibited. A connection between the dancers' simple movements and geometry is quickly revealed in these works. In addition to photographs based on these connections, Feininger was also famous for photographs of cities, for which he built four customized telephoto lenses and three close-up cameras. This allowed Feininger to have scenes without distortion and at scale.

Helmut Newton (1920–2004)

Much of Newton's life was spent photographing fashion for magazines like *Vogue*. His erotically charged black and white images usually depicted women in controversial, provocative, and highly sexualized ways. Voyeuristic in nature, Newton's work took inspiration from film noir,



Mark Rucker (b. 1949) *Angel Hermosa's Double Play*, 1974, graphite on paper, 20 x 18 inches

Expressionist cinema, the culture of sadomasochism, and surrealism. In his photograph of David Hockney, Newton departs from his normal subject matter, but is still able to achieve the extreme contrast in lighting and deep focus on the subject that he has in his fashion work. Debates continue on whether Newton's work crosses the line towards a menacing stance on women.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902-2002)

Manuel Álvarez Bravo is widely credited as the most important Latin American photographer of the 20th century, with a career spanning seventy years although the artist was mostly self-taught. Much of his important work was done after the Mexican Revolution that thrust the country into a period of modernization. Bravo explores this rapid modernization in his photographs, while also diving into his Mexican roots and heritage. Many of his photographs capture people, buildings, and objects of the ordinary, but usually in a surrealist and anti-picturesque way. Early on Bravo was influenced by many European photographers, but soon become enamored by Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera. In works like *Bicicletas en domingo*, Bravo is able to absorb the stereotypes of the picturesque Mexico within the vast desert and mountains in the background, but subverts this by capturing an everyday moment through a leisurely ride of bicyclists on a Sunday afternoon.

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938)

Meyerowitz's work is in the tradition of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank, who, like him, shot street photography. Meyerowitz, however, transitioned from black-and-white to color film, becoming one of the first to popularize and adapt the method. Although *Lake in Catskill Mountains (Woman throws crutches)* isn't in color, it still works in the same method of the photographer as bystander, capturing a shot of the everyday goings-on of people. His timing and framing is brilliant as he catches the subject throwing the crutches up in the air in joy. In all the other action of the scene, Meyerowitz is able to find his main subject, while not feeling staged or artificial. It feels like a memory of anyone on vacation at the lake, playing with their kids.



Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902 – 2002) *Bicicletas en domingo*, 1966, gelatin silver print on paper, 8 x 10 inches

Double Play Checklist

Kyle Avery (b.1988)
Hoop Dreams, 2016
Collage on paper
11 ½ x 15 inches

Jay, 2016
Collage on paper
11 ½ x 15 inches

Len, 2016
Collage on paper
11 ½ x 15 inches

Untitled, 2016
Collage on paper
11 ½ x 15 inches

Manuel Alvarez Bravo (1902 – 2002)
Bicicletas en domingo, 1966
Gelatin silver print on paper
8 x 10 inches

Andreas Feininger (1906 – 1999)
Girl Lifting Leg and Left Arm, 1950
Gelatin silver print on paper
8 x 10 inches

Girl Moving Arm, 1950
Gelatin silver print on paper
8 x 10 inches

Mary Ellen Mark (1940 – 2015)
Boy with Lasso, Texas 7/1991, 1991
Gelatin silver print on paper
11 x 14 inches

Joel Meyerowitz (b. 1938)
*Lake in Catskill Mountains (Woman
throws crutches)*, 1971
Gelatin silver print on paper
11 x 14 inches

Helmut Newton (1920 – 2004)
*David Hockney, Piscine Royale,
Paris*, 1975
Gelatin silver print on paper
12 x 8 inches

Ry Rocklen (b. 1978)
*Trophy Modern 2013 Norton
Christmas Project*, 2013
Mixed media
24 x 12 x 12 inches

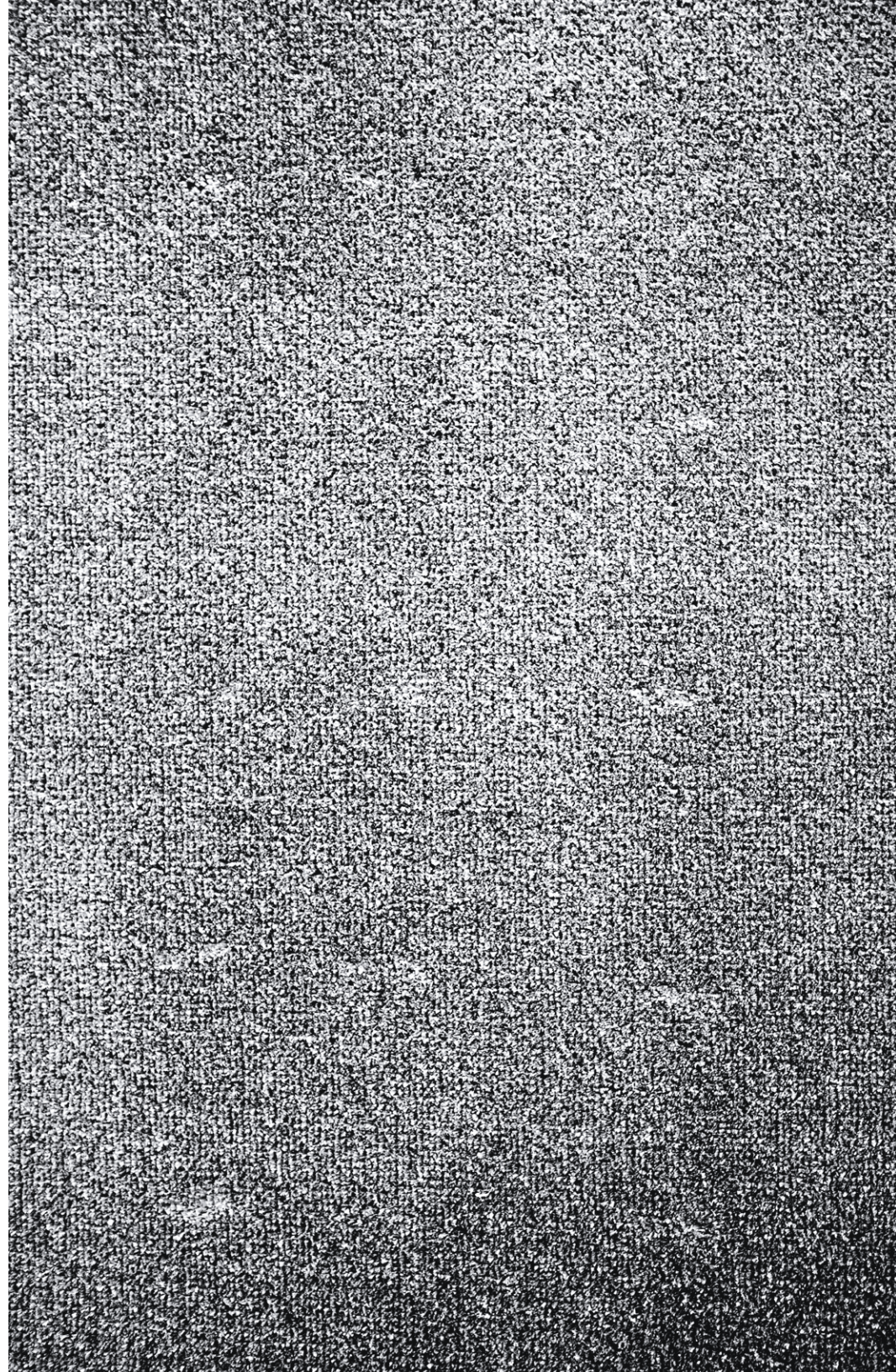
Mark Rucker (b. 1949)
Angel Hermosa's Double Play, 1974
Graphite on paper
20 x 18 inches

Neal Slavin (b. 1941)
*Women's International Softball
Team*, 1979
Ektacolor RC paper on paper
10 ½ x 10 ½ inches

World Body Building Guild, 1979
Ektacolor RC paper on paper
9 ¼ x 13 inches

Andy Warhol (1928 – 1987)
Jon Gould, n.d.
Black and white print on paper
8 x 10 inches

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, 1978
Polacolor type 108 on paper
4 ¼ x 3 ¾ inches



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The Collections Study Space, located at Fine Arts 121, is free and open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

To view selected holdings from the Collections, schedule guided tours, conduct research, or reserve classroom time please email dabbatiello@albany.edu