

Syracuse University

SURFACE at Syracuse University

International Programs

International Programs

Summer 8-7-2020

Abstraction and the Idea of Sports

Julia Taszycka

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/eli>



Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)

The views expressed in these works are entirely those of their authors and do not represent the views of the Fulbright Program, the U.S. Department of State, or any of its partner organizations.

Recommended Citation

Taszycka, Julia, "Abstraction and the Idea of Sports" (2020). *International Programs*. 77.
<https://surface.syr.edu/eli/77>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the International Programs at SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Programs by an authorized administrator of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Abstraction and The Idea of Sports

JULIA TASZYCKA

BEHAVIOR

In both fields the behavior of participants is different than in everyday life. Paying attention to the things, objects and other abstract elements, i.e. painted lines on the ground, makes both players and viewers in an art gallery act very specifically and irrationally. Players adjust their movement to the abstract graphic lines and fields; however, art viewers also pay exceptional attention to things that in everyday life don't mean anything.

ABSTRACT

In both art and sports, abstract behavior is very noticeable. During the game players act in a very specific and irrational way. This kind of behavior is caused by different perception and attention to things that don't matter in everyday life. In relation to behavior and perception, the notion of purpose is also very abstract in sports. Sport activities themselves serve no purpose, exactly like artworks. Their meanings exist only in specific context.

PERCEPTION

Both in art and sports the perception differs from everyday life. In the context of art, perception becomes sensitive, focused and set on aesthetic or intellectual experience. In art gallery we pay attention to things that we would never see this way in another context (f.ex. Duchamp's urinal).



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917, replica from 1964). Photo: McKeever, R.

INTRODUCTION

We usually assign abstraction to art, not only to art pieces but also to art activity as a whole. However, we can find similar abstraction in sports. Most people don't see sport as an abstract field. Some may say that sport and art are two completely opposite areas. But in fact the same rules that we can find in art apply when it comes to the sports.

I started to notice these similarities from an active practice in both fields as a young artist and former professional basketball player.

Abstract rules governing the field of sport may also serve as an useful reference for any activity taken in the world of art.

In sport the perception changes in relation to time, spaces, signs but also specific objects that in everyday life are useless.

In sport the perception of time is fragmented, which itself produces new meaning, and forces a different kind of attention. The spaces in which these events take place--fields, courts, rinks-- are bordered, separating the abstracted reality within from the ordinary world. The ways in which these spaces are divided, and the rules that apply to the various fields, directly affect the psychical and psychological behavior of the participants.



NOTION OF PURPOSE

In both sports and in arts we are dealing with activity that has no real benefit. As Huizinga (1998) stated "Play ... lies outside the reasonableness of practical life; has nothing to do with necessity or utility, duty or truth" (p. 158).

It's quite hard to imagine 10 adults running after a round object in a context other than sport, or someone who puts their whole energy to create an art object that serves no purpose. The abstraction of these situations works by taking them out of the everyday context and closing them in separate "framework" with separate rules.

SUMMARY

Abstract rules which form the field of sport can also be used as an instance of any activity taken in the world of art. Both fields share similar aspects concerning behavior, notion of purpose and perception of artists and athletes. These features are based on specific rules and abstract way of thinking and are strongly connected to the context of the activity.

REFERENCES

Duchamp, M. (1917, replica from 1964) *Fountain* [ready made], Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy. Photo: McKeever, R. (2019). <https://www.linnpress.com/critical-journalism>.

Huizinga, J. (1998) *Homo Ludens*, Routledge, p. 158.

Taszycka, J. (2017) *Court*, Skala Gallery, Poznan, Poland

