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Artists' Playground at Sudeley Castle: trended overview

VICTORIA SMITH, WGSN 11.06.08

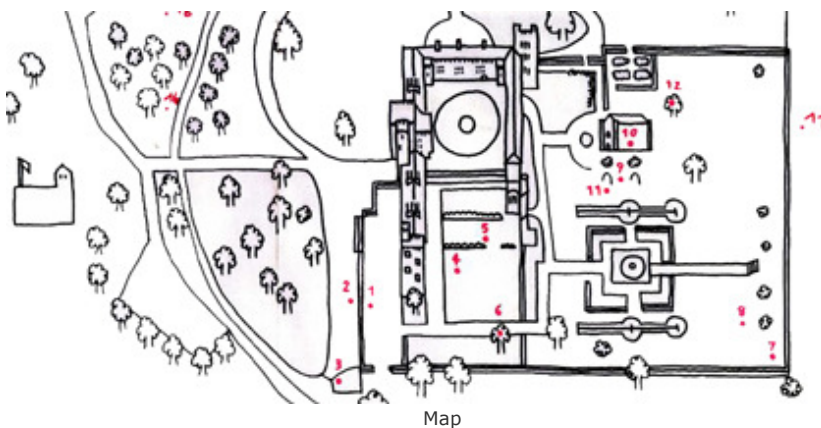
WGSN visits *Artists' Playground*, a new UK exhibition based around the diverse themes of play and recreation, where the contrast between contemporary art, the backdrop of the Cotswolds and the partial ruins of a Tudor castle allow for an inspiring collaboration.

Reconstruction is an annual open air exhibition and showroom of works by leading international and up-and-coming artists and designers. Curated by Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst, former director of the London Gagosian and Elliot McDonald, curator of Hiscox Art Projects. The exhibition is in partnership with Phillips de Pury & Company, the internationally renowned auction house.

This year's event, the third in the series, is titled *Artists' Playground* and the event invited contemporary artists and designers to create their work in the beautiful historical surroundings of Sudeley Castle.

The work is exhibited throughout the castle grounds and each artist chose their own position, in order for the work to react with the castle and the Play theme personally.

Among the ambitious and creative pieces are *Ambo* by Henry Krokatsis, *Sudeley Pitchfork* by Michael Craig-Martin and *Hangin' Tree* by Kevin Francis Gray.



Chanel co-hosted the opening party on May 31. **Amanda Carr, WGSN Store Design and Visual Merchandising Editor**, said: "Chanel has always been innovative with its ideas in the art world, from the recent **Zaha Hadid Mobile Art project** showing contemporary artists to this creative link with the sculptures at Sudeley Castle.

"Globally, we're noticing an increase in inspirational link-ups between brands, retailers and artists, who all benefit from the collaboration."

About the exhibition

Reconstruction #3: Artists' Playground commissions the artists to take part and create works inspired by the theme of "Play" using the picturesque grounds as their canvas.

The theme gives the exhibition a loose structure. "When such an open theme is used," participating artist Henry Krokatsis explained to WGSN, "there is no humming between the pieces and it is such a mismatch, but because of the surroundings it pulls all the pieces together."

Visitors are led through the castle grounds, over bridges and through secret gardens by a hand-drawn treasure map to search out the contemporary sculptures. Displayed within the partially ruined grounds, the exhibit includes a giant slide, a mirrored labyrinth, a flying machine

Key highlights

- Interesting way of exhibiting art - reinspiring the art market
- Art in situ ideas to inspire visual merchandise - retailers getting involved with art events is nothing new but expect to see the products and ideas produced back in the retail space
- Collaboration between up-and-coming and prestige artists to illustrate innovative ways of working
- Physical ideas for trend development in design and interiors

Fact file

Reconstruction #3: The Artists' Playground
June 1- October 31

Sudeley Castle
Cotswolds Hills
Gloucestershire
www.sudeleycastle.co.uk

Monday-Sunday
10:30am-5:00pm

Phillips de Pury & Company
www.PhillipsdePury.com

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and a gothic tree house.



Sudeley Pitchfork by Michael Craig-Martin, 2008



On The Water: In The Pond by Lawrence Weiner, 2008



Pillars by Ai Weiwei, 2006-2007



Untitled (The Thing) by Piotr Uklanski, 2008

Themes

Three main themes that captured the artists' imagination were **exploration, fun and games** and **enchantment**.

Many of the artists incorporated interaction within their pieces **blending art and entertainment** and producing a **physical sense of play**.

Jeppe Hein's mirrored labyrinth supplies multiple views of the surroundings reflected in its walls. Carsten Holler has created *The Flying Machine*, an installation which involves a volunteer being strapped into a mechanical contraption that swings through the air. And to appreciate James Hopkins' sculptures you have to look through a kaleidoscopic telescope.



Flying Machine by Carsten Holler, 2008

Exploration

- Investigations into the joys of hide and seek
- Again these pieces are enhanced by the picturesque surroundings
- Foliage is reflected in a mirror labyrinth
- Colours and shapes are distorted through James Hopkins' champagne-bottle kaleidoscope and camera obscura



Simplified Mirror Labyrinth 1
by Jeppe Hein, 2008



Focus Length by James Hopkins, 2008

Fun & Games

- The physical and humorous side to play
- Represented by actual games
- *The Level Playing Field* by Rolf Sachs is inspired by ping-pong
- A chequerboard is part of Tom Dixon's *Chair, Swing, Chaise, Table*
- The world seen through a child's imagination
- War games, cascading down a slide and flying through the air



A Level Playing Field by Rolf Sachs, 2008



Large Canon (British) by
Jonathan Monk, 2008



Chair, Swing, Chaise, Table
by Tom Dixon, 2008



Z-Stream by Zaha Hadid, 2008

Enchanted

- A fairy-tale story of childhood heavily infused with spirituality
- Represented by *Ambo* by Henry Krokatsis, a gloriously gothic tree house
- Hyperreflective moon tables by Arik Levy
- Kevin Francis Gray's eerily veiled figure perches within a tree
- Richard Woods' intriguing, colourful castle doors



See Better Daze by Henry Krokatsis, 2008



Ambo by Henry Krokatsis, 2008



Moon Table 90 by Arik Levy, 2008



Hangin' Tree by Kevin Francis Gray, 2008



Lifestyle Sculpture #1-5 by Richard Woods, 2008

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Exploration

*Featured artists James Hopkins and Jeppe Hein

- Many of the artists incorporated interaction within their pieces, blending art with entertainment and producing a physical sense of play.
- Jeppe Hein's mirrored surfaces and James Hopkins' kaleidoscopic telescope distort the surroundings; their reflections, creating a surreal internal world.
- The sharp angles of Jeppe Hein's *Simplified Mirror Labyrinth 1* contrast with the softness of the foliage, combining rural countryside with man-made installations.
- Garden greens, pinks and purples accented against soft stone white natural tones and gold.

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Stark

*Featured Artists Arik Levy, Kevin Francis Grey, Henry Krokatsis

- Stark white contrasts on dark backgrounds with combinations of texture and material including wood, plastic, stone, beads and wax.
- The spiritually enchanting images from Sudeley's St Marys Church are echoed in the art. In *Seen Better Daze* antlers are moulded out of recycled votive candles and in *Arr* reconstructed church pulpit masquerades as a gothic-looking house.
- Eerie and nightmarish, bright white sculptures haunt the castle ground covered by imaginary sheets or cascading beads creating a feeling of unease.
- The severe white made these sculptures stand out in contrast to the lush greenery of the Cotswolds hills making the outside pieces look surreal, plucked from a child's fantasy.

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Fun

*Featured artists Lawrence Weiner, Uklanski, Michael Craig-Martin and Z Hadid

- Humorous digital-inspired art using plastic, wood and metal.
- Surreal visual effects as the piece appear to be floating, detached from the castle grounds.
- Oversized in block colours of hot pink, sci-fi silver and blue.
- Scientific elements offering a surreal environment add to the creative confusion.

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Games

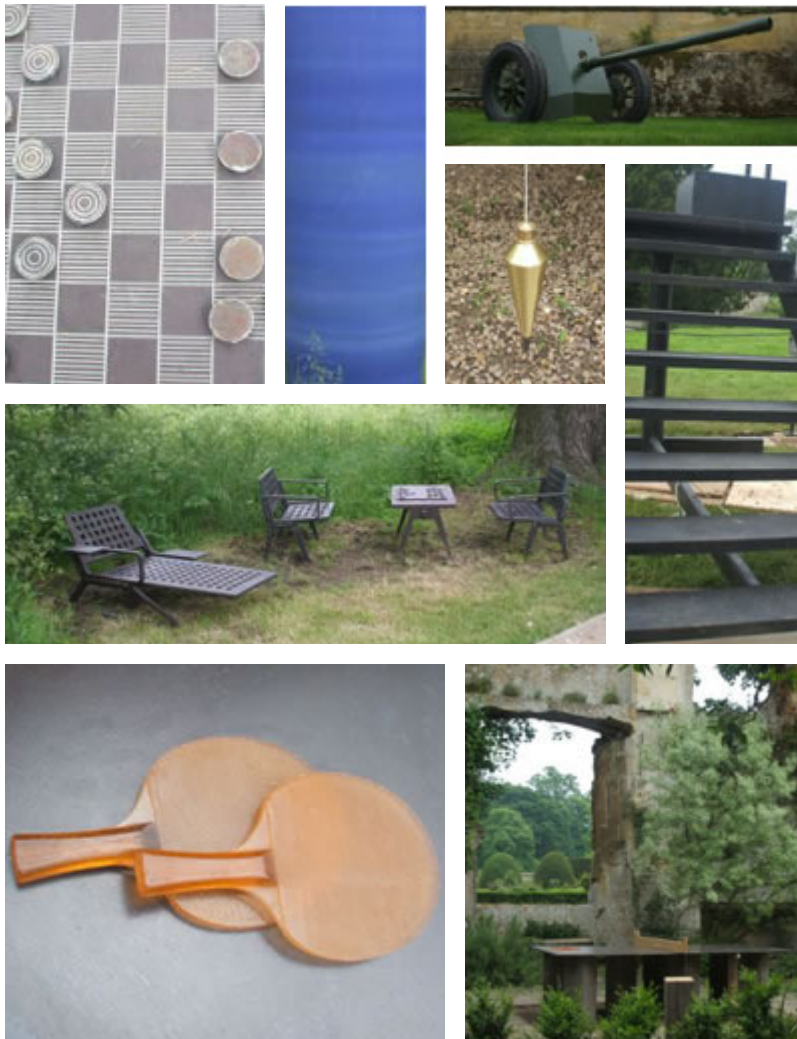
*Featured artists Rolf Sachs, Carste Holler, Tom Dixon, Jonathan Monk and Ai Weiwei

- A continual colour palette of blues highlighted with orange and gold number of materials such as metal and plastic with a glossy finish.
- Circular shapes with a combination of textures - raised, scratched, etched and cutout.
- A physical and humorous side to it. This is represented by actual games. The *Level Playing Field* by Rolf Sachs is inspired by ping-pong and a checkerboard features in Tom Dixon's *Chair, Swing, Chaise, Table*.
- Inspired by a world seen through a child's imagination - war games and things flying through the air.

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