

WORKPLACE

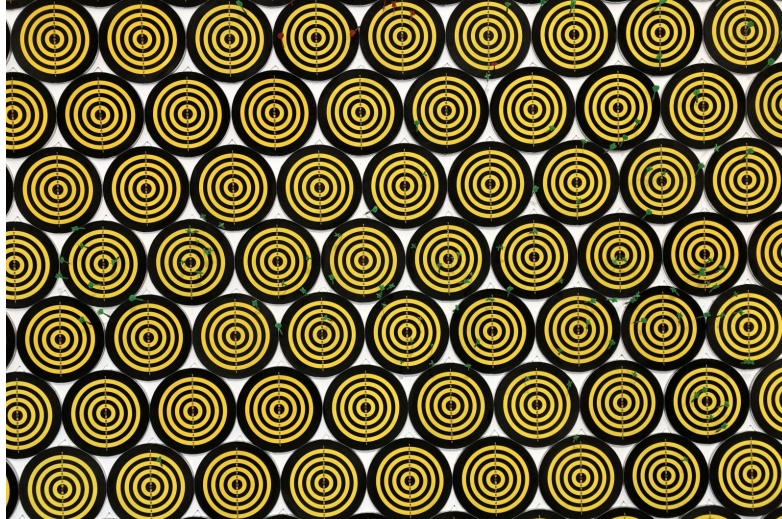
Daily Sabah

On art as diversion: Arter exhibits 'ThisPlay'

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DAILY SABAH



Jacob Dahlgren, "The World, Things, Life," 2007, dart boards and arrows. (Photo by Matt Hanson)

A vast group show, including works by nearly sixty artists, spreads across two floors of Arter's interior, where the overall theme showcases the creative diversity of fun and games, revivifying art world professionalism in the process

The cold, postcolonial shell of museum whiteness can be deadening to public morale in the face of worldwide calamity and local displacements, firming up the hard, infertile soil on which the cause of culture rests, as it were, in the eternal sleep of institutionalization, like a body flown out to deep space in a cryogenic cell, light-years away. The answer from leading, traditional establishments as the Louvre, Tate and the Met, has been to deaccession in response to international calls for the old Eurocentric guard to put down their shields and give back the treasures their colonialist forefathers stole.

And as masterpieces of art by the world's Indigenous Peoples art leave their vitrines and collections where they've enriched the wealthy, leisure classes who've relished in the fruit of their imperial acquisitions, a rage of artists has come to claim that empty space motivated to create new works and relations in the spirit of independence and occupation, to redirect the runaway train of

civilization from collision to flight, within, and without the trappings of history. That is, in effect, where art comes in, as a discipline that, while not immune to the traumas of the past, serves as a bold and refreshing empowerment of the present moment.

To hint at laughter

Unexpectedly, to some, while obvious to others, the seemingly rigid bearings of Arter are home to a diversity of experimental visions with respect to art's relationship to general society, as it inspires its workers to engage with the general population, children and the working-class, so that they might let their worldly presumptions down, like their hair, and lighten up in front of a late-night game in the light of day. A piece by Swedish artist Jacob Dahlgren starts the show, "ThisPlay," from the top down, curated with a taste for disparate resonance by Emre Baykal, as its readymade dartboards, combined together, form the likeness of a pop-art painting.

Dahlgren began his artistic work in abstract painting, incorporating geometric forms and everyday colors. A player might walk over to his work, "I, The World, Things, Life" (2007), and pick up five darts, and allow their mind to be subsumed by the visual field of concentric yellow and black circles. In an adjacent room, a reworked ping-pong table by George Maciunas, a key figure in Fluxus, is almost unplayable, its paddles stapled with bottle caps or topped with cleaning brushes. The subversion of logic for joy, the competitive wheels of capitalism for the square tires of parody, is arguably the chief *raison d'être* of the contemporary artist.