

Art Jock

wants you



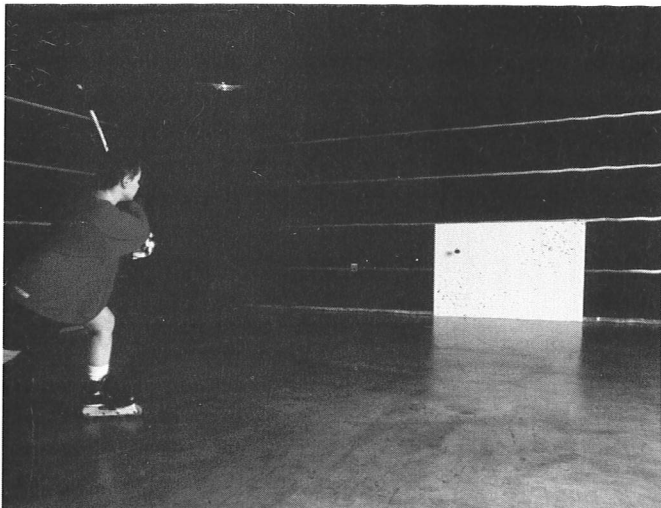
to get in the

Game

Art Jock

Over the last 5 years artists have increasingly adopted the subject of sports to explore gender, identity and popular culture. (Think Mathew Barney and Paul Pfeiffer.) Why is sports a subject being explored through art now? Various reasons may contribute to the intersection of sports and art. Athletes are the perfect receptacle to play out one's dreams and fantasies of being the best in a success-oriented culture; the media attention dedicated to athletes has rendered them part of the pantheon of celebrity culture; the art world's practice of catapulting certain artists into stardom to fuel an ever-expanding art market parallels the marketing strategies that contribute to the cult status of the athlete.

Art Jock is a persona, created and embodied by Liss Platt, that fuses both artist and athlete into one identity. The crux of this identity is predicated on the idea that *Art Jock* plays sports in order to make art, a seemingly contradictory proposition on many levels. Referencing both Eleanor Antin and Adrien Piper's use of the persona to call attention to gender and racial disparities in society, *Art Jock* is a societal gender-bender. *Art Jock* self-consciously inhabits the traditionally masculine role of both the artist and the athlete. She also underscores the similarity between playing sports and making art. Finally, she neutralizes the angst associated with making art by reminding viewers that art is about energy, activity and should be simply pleasurable.



Art Jock's painting process—shooting hockey pucks at painted 4' x 6' plywood canvases while wearing in-line skates—literally parallels the exertion necessary in playing sports. *Art Jock* ironically imitates Jackson Pollack's action painting style while critiquing the artworld that embraced his bad boy attitude and placed him into the art historical canon of male (genius) artists. In contrast to Pollock's busy paint strewn canvases; however, *Art Jock's* paintings are minimal using gestural marks and subtle color that are created when the pucks (in some cases the pucks are painted) strike the canvas, leaving traces of paint and puck rubber on the surface. In this way, *Art Jock* both inverts and embraces stereotypical gender roles by comfortably inhabiting them both—bad boy artist and delicate painter.

Like the puck paintings, *Art Jock's* large-scale bruise prints reference sports play and its after effects, thus positioning Art Jock in a clearly masculine role. By scanning her bruises, an effect of her hockey playing, she creates abstract studies of the body that resemble painting more than photography. Using a warm palette and presented as larger-than-life, the prints are visually seductive which belies the exertion and pain that are implicit in their creation.

Art Jock makes videos that simulate real time physical activity. In her mountain bike video, viewers ride with *Art Jock* and see what she sees and hear what she hears. Unlike the puck paintings, which require specific hockey playing skills or her bruise prints that are the result of her hockey playing, her mountain bike video invites viewers to voyeuristically partake in her physical activity. Viewers are encouraged to feel the rush of adrenaline involved in playing sports and by extension making art.

Art Jock addresses the quandary of being both an artist and a jock. By creating a persona that reflects her identity, Platt breaks away from the culturally prescribed roles of gender and class. *Art Jock* is an amalgamation of low culture (sports) and high (conceptual) art values. In making art objects from performative sports play, *Art Jock* pokes fun at the artworld while relishing her own personal art practice.

Karina Skvirsky, Artist and Educator



Biographies

Artist and educator Karina Aguilera Skvirsky uses digital technologies to produce work that addresses the psychology and politics of living in a global/post-colonial world. Her work uses appropriated materials often-textual information to examine the manifestations of American hegemony both through popular culture and history. Her work has been exhibited at Art in General, the Bronx Museum of Art, Urban Institute of Contemporary Art, SF Camerawork and the Houston Center for Photography. She has participated in numerous residencies including the Banff Centre for Art, in Canada, the Longwood Cyberresidency and the Woodstock Center of Photography. She has worked as both a curator and is part of the faculty at the International Center for Photography. Her curatorial projects include Artexts and more recently 10048 Inbox V, a project created in response to September 11. Her work is in the collections of El Museo del Barrio, the Samuel Dorsky Museum, the Brooklyn Museum of Art and other institutions. She is also a member of the College Art Association, the Society for Photographic Education and Art Table.

Liss Platt is a media artist whose works take the form of videotapes, films, photographs, web sites, and installations. Her media work combines personal narrative, critical analysis, humour, and gender politics to explore the way various representations (popular, subcultural, artistic) inform our understanding of ourselves within

the world. Her works often employ humor as a strategy to increase accessibility and reach an audience that may not be open to or interested in queer subjectivities.

Most recently, she has been concentrating on creating abstract, formal works that examine the place of the body in art. These works also emerge from her desire to harness the gesture of the sports she plays, and to explore how her physicality relates to her personal history.

Liss Platt's video and film works have been exhibited throughout the United States, at such venues as The Whitney Museum, Millennium Film Workshop, and The New Museum in New York, The San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in San Francisco, Women in the Director's Chair in Chicago, and The Wexner Center in Columbus, Ohio. Her works have also screened in Canada in Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary as well internationally in England, Australia, Russia, Bratislava (Slovak Republic), Mexico, and Japan.

For the last 10 years, Liss Platt worked and lived in Brooklyn, New York. She was an Assistant Professor in Film and Video at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, for the past five years and recently joined the faculty of McMaster University as an Assistant Professor in the Multimedia Program. She now resides in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Images:

inside left: Liss Platt as Art Jock
Making a Puck Painting
performance activity (documentation), 2000

inside right: Liss Platt as Art Jock
Puck Painting XII
detail
Puck Rubber/Paint on Wood, 2001

cover: Liss Platt as Art Jock
Art Jock Post Card
6" x 4"
printed postcard, 2000

MST
MOUNTAIN STANDARD TIME

**The STRIDE
GALLERY**

Mountain Standard Time (MST) is the umbrella name for a 2-week long of performative programming in the city of Calgary. Together with eight other Calgary arts organisations, the Stride Gallery will participate in the second biannual event of performative, time-based works. This exciting festival will take place from April 1-15, 2003, and will include local, national and international artists who will produce thought-provoking hybridized forms of performance, spoken word, film, video, sound and multi-disciplinary installations in city parks, streets, malls, and galleries. As in the previous event, the goal of the collective organizations is to raise awareness of performative work in our communities and build on the strong history that performance art has within the local arts community.

This is a Stride Gallery brochure written by Karina Skvirsky who has been chosen by the artist because of her particular interest in the project. These publications provide regular opportunities for diverse writers to publish work that furthers critical discourse about contemporary art.

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