

FREE PLAY ARTISTS

Cory Arcangel • Patrick Bernier & Olive Martin • Ruth Catlow • Mary Flanagan • Futurefarmers • Ryan Gander • Jeanne van Heeswijk & Rolf Engelen • Allan McCollum & Matt Mullican • Paul Noble • Pedro Reyes • Jason Rohrer • David Shrigley • Erik Svedäng • Yoko Ono

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

No vital periods ever began from a theory. What's first is a game, a struggle, a journey.

—Guy Debord

Seeking the initial moment described by Debord, *Free Play* brings together works by an international array of artists modeled on games and play. All of the works on view are functioning games, which you are free to play. Whether the works derive from the playground, the video arcade, the casino, or the rec room, in reinventing games, the artists in *Free Play* aim to create experiences that reflect on social, political and cultural realities. Collectively the works in *Free Play* explore interactivity, an expansive topic in both current art and exhibition-making notable for the migration of participatory and live art forms into the heretofore foreign territory of the gallery or museum. Every work in this exhibition is intended to be handled and played.

Artistic processes tied to game playing have historically attracted artists of the avant-garde, most famously the chess master and legendary artist Marcel Duchamp. His every creative move had his chess partner in mind: you, the viewer. Games were intrinsic to the work of the World War I-addled Surrealists and Dadaists—the inventors of the exquisite corpse drawing game and automatic drawing—who used such games to free the artistic imagination, and upend bourgeois values. In the 1960s and 1970s, the countercultural and anti-war Fluxus group along with the New Games Foundation took on capitalism and corporate culture through games promoting cooperative, non-competitive play. The latter sponsored massive public games in city parks, while the former was

