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European Championships Artwork: Embracing the "Breaking Shells" Concept

Arbiter donned in synthetic fabric for event.

ANN BRADLEY

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Who doesn't know this cheering pose at soccer? Movie scene from "WINNER".



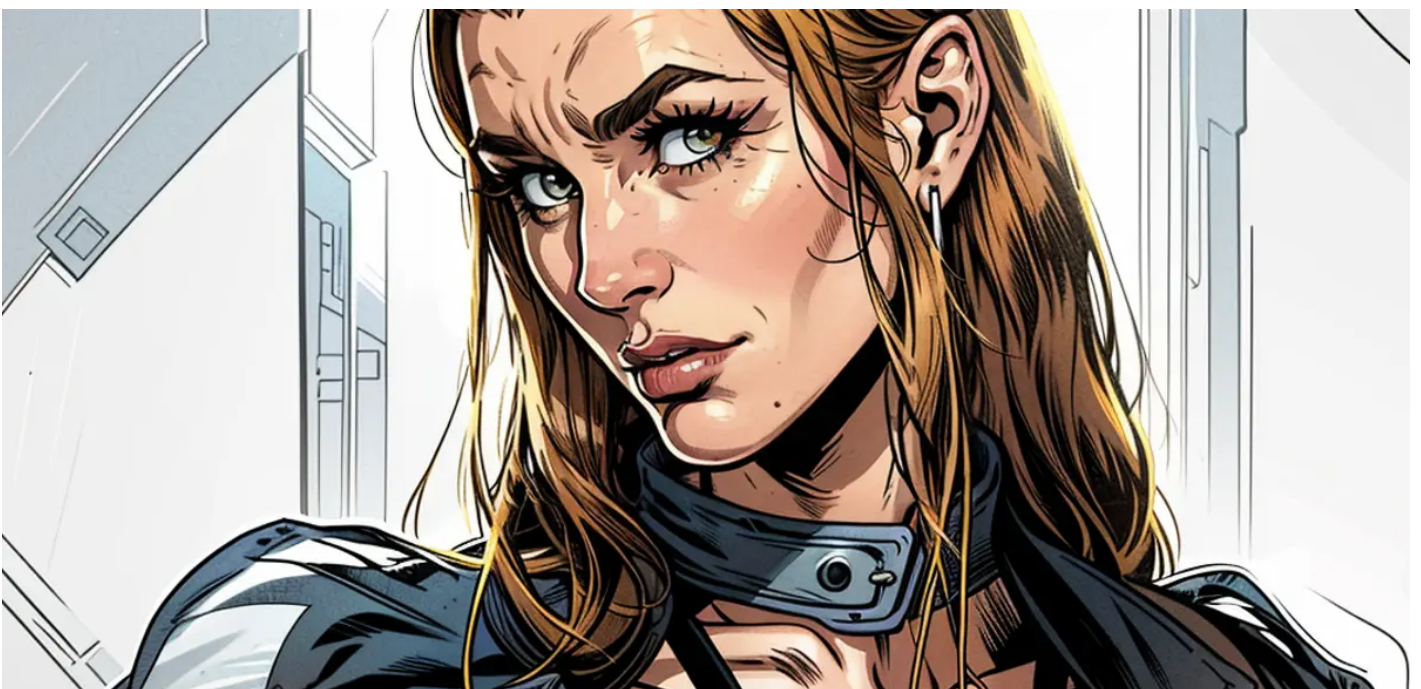
European Championships Artwork: Embracing the "Breaking Shells" Concept

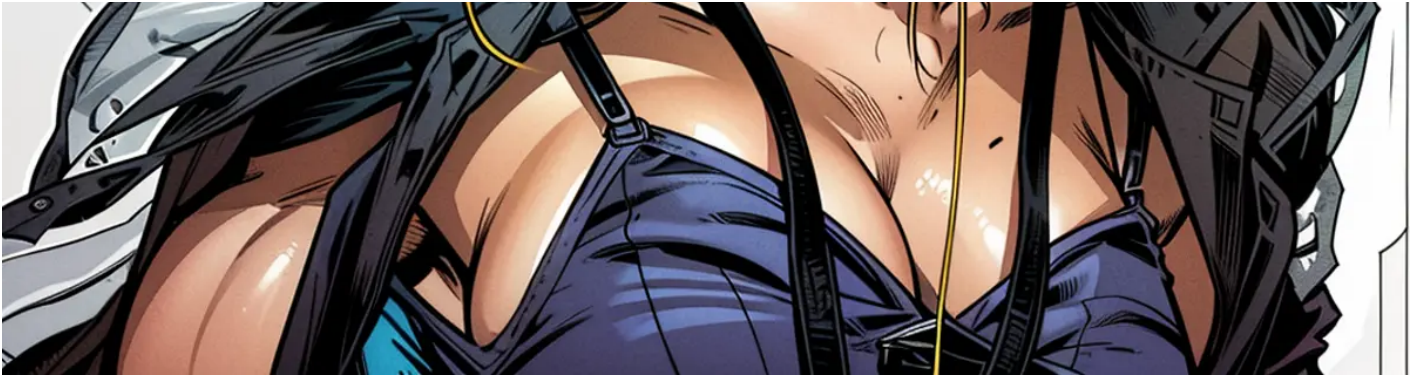
Passions stir and contrast, seemingly at odds: Initially, football and art may not seem the best of companions. Yet the Football and Culture EURO 2024 Foundation brings them together at the EM. Museum trips offer a thrilling alternative to stadium visits.

Venturing through the dim players' tunnel, we move towards the light. Inside, the atmosphere throbs with a pulsating roar, much like the stadium. The audience is instantly drawn towards the art display, initially bathed in a pleasant orange glow. Images of players dripping sweat, tears, and blood unfold on three screens. During halftime, two food vendors provide beer, fries, hotdogs drenched in extra sauce. The large-scale installation "WINNER" is now exhibited at the 'Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart', beyond the fan zones, to captivate football and art enthusiasts. And more surprises lie ahead.

In her latest creation, specifically crafted for the European Championship, the British artist Marianna Simnett delves into the world's most popular sport. It's not just about victorious champions, but also about the darker aspects, alike in real life. Marianna Simnett was taken aback when the museum curators requested a football-specific work for their institution. Until then, she had no affiliation with this ball game. She confessed during the presentation of "WINNER" that she was more of a Spice Girls fan in her youth.

Curiosity serves as a faithful sidekick for the artist, prompting her to dive into research. "The Foundation led us by the hand into the world of football," says Charlotte Knaup, one of the commission's co-curators. Unfamiliar with football, this was a new adventure. Knaup and Simnett visited Dortmund, the Football Museum. "There, it clicked for both of us," Knaup told ntv.de. "We saw iconic fouls and players pushing their limits there. That's what Simnett shares with the sport: it's about physical labor," Knaup added.





Intensely, Marianna Simnett submerged herself in the topic and divided the artistic process - a unique journey for the curator, as she puts it. Together, they even attended a football match, drank beer, and reveled in the stadium atmosphere. This brave duo explored the realm of Ultra-Fans and mass hysteria. The power of the crowd, the stadium's resonance, fascinates Knaup. In the end, Simnett now unflinchingly portrays the senseless violence of hooligans, infamous fouls, toxic hatred towards referees, unbearable performance pressure, but also surreal daydreams.

The game invented in 1842 at the University of Cambridge propelled the 38-year-old artist into the present with a group of dancers. In the film, the referee is a woman clad in a latex dress. Even amid the spilled blood, gaping wounds, and violent hooligans, an astonishing aesthetic and lightness prevail. Humor even manages to shine through. Artificial intelligence makes it happen. Those who desire can sit on winner's podiums. Unusual accessories hang on them, inviting touch.

Perhaps not everyone immediately deciphers this, laughs Charlotte Knaup. The first signs of wear are already evident. Is the artist provoking with these meticulous casts? Or is it merely realistic observation in the stadium and on the sidelines? "It's a combination," Knaup continued. "That's the jester, but at the same time, she dissects typical masculine

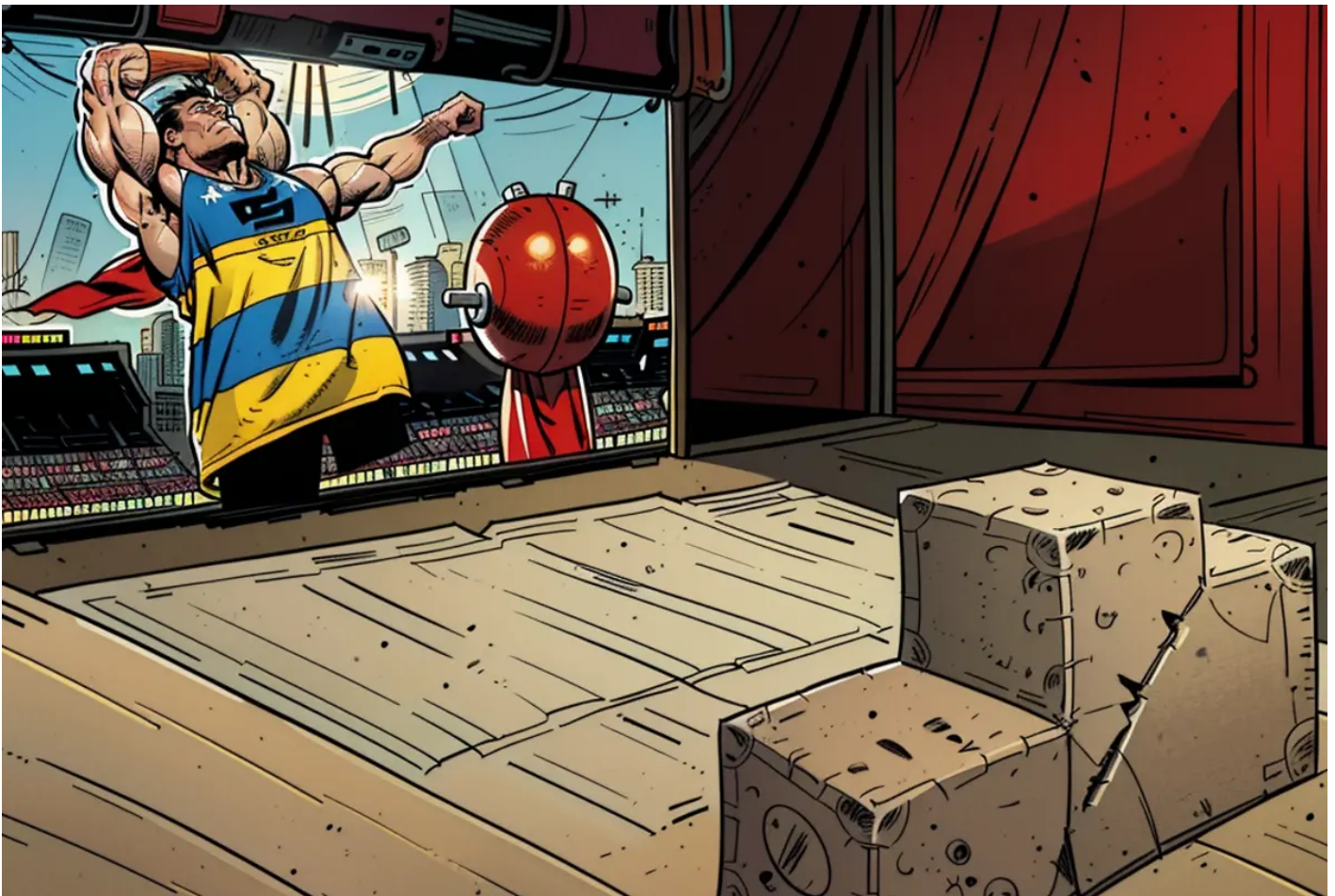
behavior." The dancers in Simnett's film work are partially clogs with a keel on their necklaces. One could indeed sit comfortably, broad-chested, watching their videos and witness 'eggs roll'.



Through Marianna Simnett's lens, even non-football fans can view the game differently. The work does not offer a clear resolution or criticism, finds Charlotte Knaup. "It may sound clichéd, but people find a community, a home in football," she concludes. "Sometimes it's the competition, sometimes it's the unifying, everything is possible. The same thing exists in art as well." The range of emotions remains her constant draw.

"WINNER" appeals to the novice as well, sparking a desire to witness a live game with Simnett. Surprisingly, the artist herself is on the hunt for EURO tickets. The EURO 2024 Football and Culture Foundation in Berlin cannot fulfill her wish. Instead, another location, titled "Radical Playgrounds," was funded from their foundation's budget in Berlin. On the Gropius Bau parking lot, a temporary playground has been established. Admission is free.

This is art accessible to all. The participating artists and participants seek to guide you by imaginary rules and not compete against each other, unlike in a football match. The subtitle of the event, "From Competition to Collaboration," makes it clear: Those who play and train here seek freedom to challenge rules and change situations intuitively. Perhaps everyone can win.





Riding the Wave: Miniscule critters transform halfpipes into slides! No board required! The credit goes to Florentina Holzinger, a drama queen known for her daring acts. Here, she's kept things a bit tame by propping up two rusty old cars to create supports for the slide. Ta-da! A section fit for an artistic playground has emerged.

The EURO Continues, Baby!

Sneakily nestled somewhere in the middle, the Lozziworm weaves around. This cheery, striped plastic tube hails from the '70s. Adventurers can explore the playground's history while they wriggle and climb inside. The concept originated in Denmark back in '43, and it quickly spread like wildfire worldwide. The revamped play area at Gropius Bau is a hotspot for daily rough-and-tumble fun, welcoming all ages and nationalities for playful encounters.



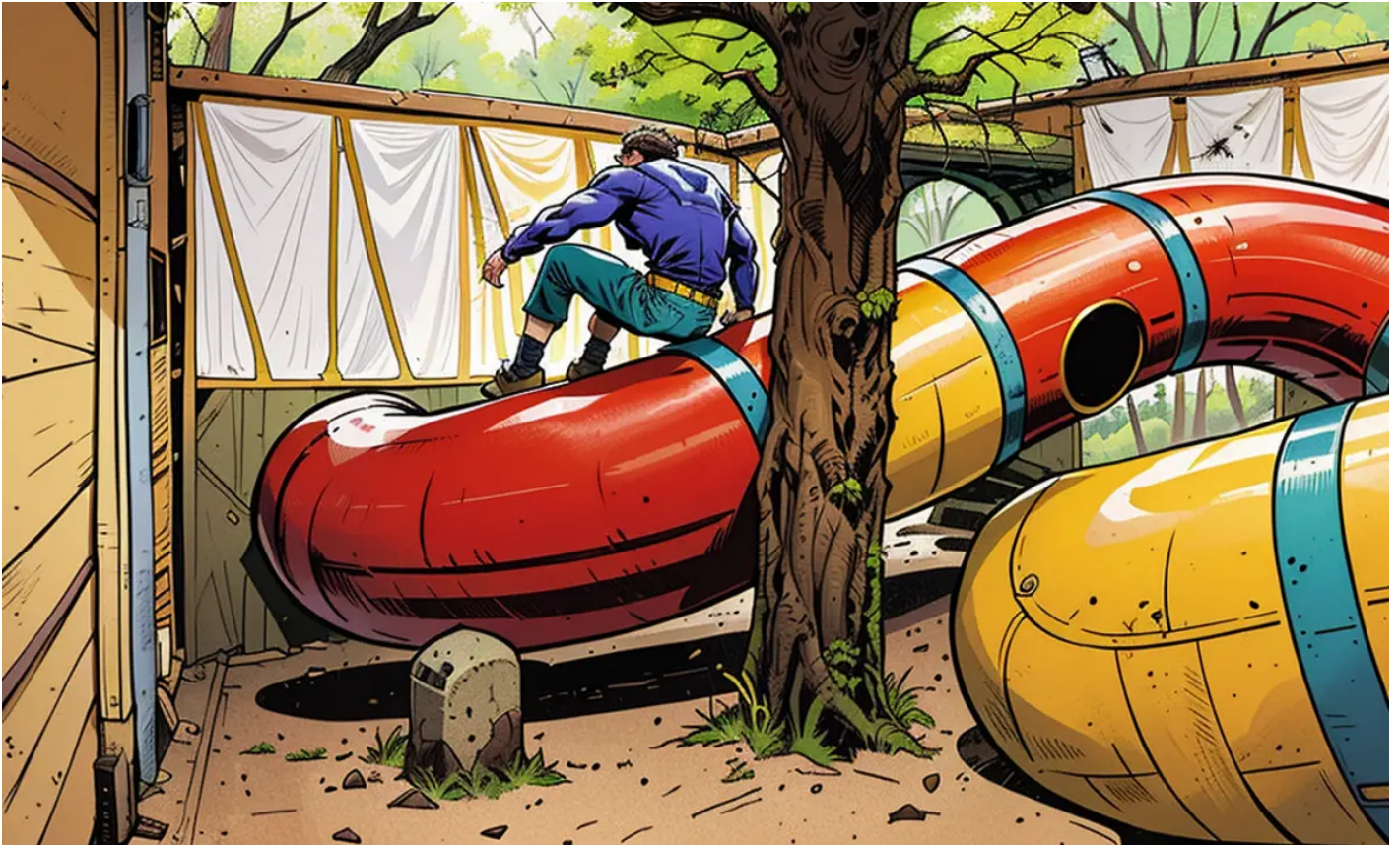


Radical Playgrounds should ideally persist for weeks beyond the EURO's end.

At the EURO, the foundation's brought art into the game too. Over at the Folkwang Museum in Essen, there's an exhibit titled "Lodging places instead of birthing places." Artist Andreas Slominski's collected football posters, reviving forgotten memories. He's even whipped up special football-flavored bread for the occasion. Caricatures fuel the football frenzy in Hannover. At the Wilhelm Busch Museum, you'll find a critical, entertaining spin on the King of Sports. Plus, there are VR glasses in Gelsenkirchen that transport you to five of Europe's most electrifying football destinations — it's all happening at St. Joseph Church, not Schalke.

So, if you're not feeling the one-of-a-kind football-art vibe, there's always dance, music, theater, film, and workshops on sports. In total, the foundation's backed 60 cultural projects for the EURO across ten cities. So, jump off the bench, dive right into the culture. In the end, it's all about the winner taking it all.



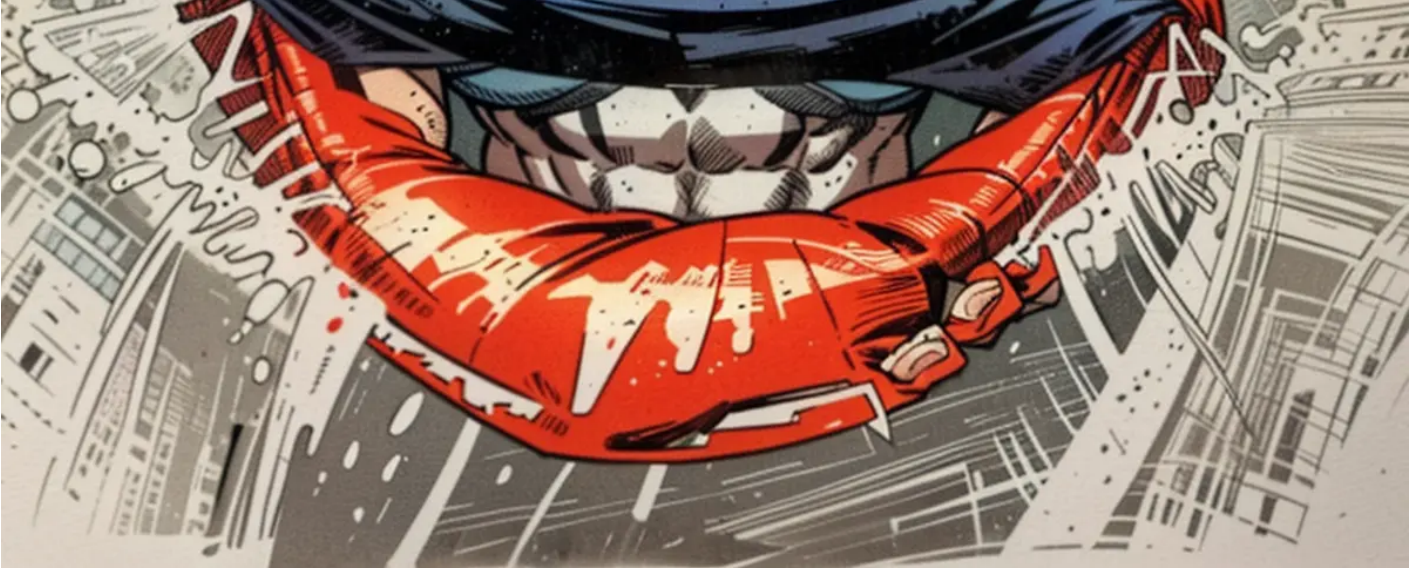


WINNER, until November 3, Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum of Contemporary Art, 10557 Berlin

Radical Playgrounds: From Competition to Collaboration, until July 14, Gropius Bau on the Park Terrace, 10963 Berlin

For the entire football and culture foundation Euro 2024 program, [click here](#)





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