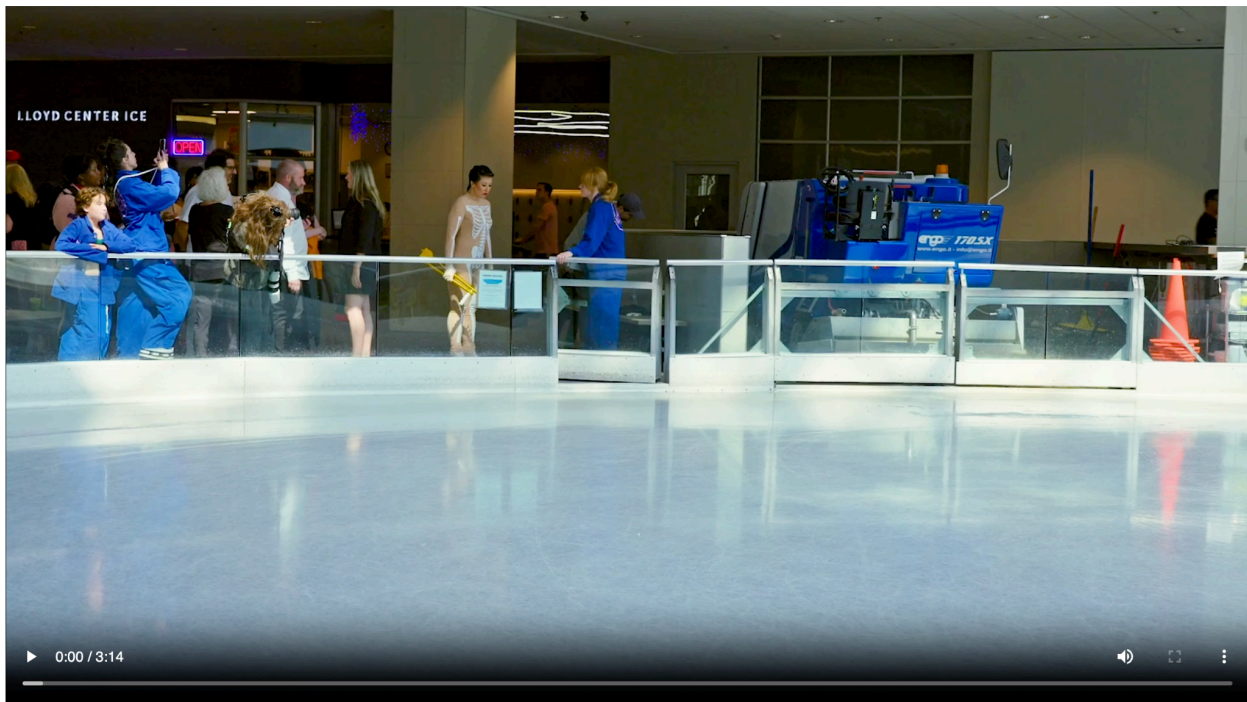




Discovery

Letter from the Editors

Game Time



Amanda Ross-Ho. Untitled Figure (THE CENTER OF IT ALL) (excerpted), 2023 Lloyd Center Mall Ice Rink, Portland, Oregon. 11:00 AM PST, August 25th, 2023.

Endurance, determination, perseverance, performance, luck, failure, ardor, technique, practice, repetition, drive, force, ambition: the lexicon rooted in the worlds of art and athletics, one so ubiquitously borrowed from that presently it evokes the nebulous ideals of a VC-backed monoculture, distilled in advertisements for productivity software, electronic appliances of increasingly slender profiles, the backstory of any given startup. Worn thin, in other words. Cliché. And for good reason: its narrative potency is indisputable.

The appeal is in the inherently active, participatory nature of this lexicon; the stock figures it has borne—the jock-artist, the savant-athlete—natural protagonists in the primal wholesomeness of their being, body moving in tandem with intellect. But, of course, none of it would be the subject of fascination if nobody was watching. Perhaps the best way to eschew cliché is to look towards where it emerges, so we turn our eyes to the spectator.

In thinking about what the relationship might look like turned inside out, our starting point is the performance on the cover of this issue, which we had the fortune to witness last year at the Lloyd Center Mall in Portland, Oregon. Amanda Ross-Ho's *Untitled Figure (The Center of It All)* was presented as part of Converge 45's 2023 biennial program in conjunction with *ICE TIME*, the artist's solo exhibition with the Portland gallery ILY2.

Ross-Ho performed the Circle Eight—a basic building block of skating training—over and over again, turning what is typically confined to practice in intense repetition and void of entertainment value into a spectator event, making the private process public and inverting the unspectacular into spectacle. She traced this infinity symbol with her skates until she performed a version of it she deemed competent until it felt like her muscle's memory of it was recovered. This was her first time on the ice in thirty years, and she did not practice before the performance.

"I was very shaky at first and very slowly accessed and remembered my body's programming. I felt that whatever this process looked like was the performance," says Amanda Ross-Ho, reflecting on the piece. The artist wore an illusion skeleton suit—which also appeared in a scaled-up version as a textile sculpture at the gallery exhibition across town—and had her hair and makeup done specifically referencing Harding's styling at the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics, where a broken skate lace caused her to interrupt and dramatically postpone her performance. "The idea was to sculpt the three psychic traces of aging bodies, histories, and malls and create a perpetual image of mortality.

“Being intensely trained in a sport comes with the empowerment of specialized knowledge and a full understanding of how to cultivate long-term, sustained processes,” Ross-Ho responds to the question of what she carried into her artistic career from the one she had in the sport. “It is the process of learning how to build something. The experience of being an athlete taught me about having a ‘practice’ as an idea generally, which is a committed relationship based in a tradition but also about personal self-realization and an intense understanding of your body.”

Throughout the issue, our contributors contemplate spectacle, spectatorship, performance, and practice in their many manifestations.

Lingering on the ice rink, in her essay **Kim Hew-Low** writes about what happens when a sport contrives artistry to benefit the viewer.

On the pitch of the Premier League, as mediated by a screen in a pub, **Orit Gat** considers the objective gaze of the Video Assistant Referee and what it takes away from the game.

Alissa Bennett writes about *VISITORS*—a new book of photographs by Nick Karp documenting Game Changer Wrestling’s 2023 death match in Tokyo’s storied Korakuen Hall—and the lurid attraction of performed violence.

Finally, Cultural Counsel account executive and newly diehard basketball devotee **Rachel Roberts** interviews **Andrew Kuo** and **Ben Detrick** of the cult podcast *Cookies Hoops* about fandom, performance and aesthetics, and the infiniteness of Basketball.

And now — Game Time!

The Editors of *Discovery*

Editorial Director: Hunter Braithwaite

Editors: Jane Drinkard & Stacey Streshinsky

Photo Editor: Flannery Strain

Copy Editor: Ellie Lynch