

# ABOVE THE SERIOUS

November 28 - December 9, 2010,

private view Saturday November 27, 6 - 9 pm

The Gallery, Stoke Newington Library, Edward's Lane (off Stoke Newington Church Street)

eelprojects@yahoo.co.uk

EEL PROJECTS<sup>1</sup> is happy to present artwork of 13 contemporary artists whose practice can be characterized as "playful". The title of the show is based on a quotation from "Homo Ludens" (1938), a brilliant work of Johan Huizinga, the founder of the theory of play: **"In play we move below the level of the serious, as the child does; but we can also move above it -- in the realm of the beautiful and the sacred."** Thus, the exhibition features the works by those artists for whom the so-called "play-element", brought out by Huizinga, is particularly important. For some toys and games are a source of inspiration, others actually use children's toys as a material, while others create imaginative worlds, or just play with materials, messages and contexts and get unpredictable results. But the meaning of the exhibited artworks often goes far beyond their playfulness, inviting us to explore the relationship between play and art.

**Lesley Halliwell** creates her elaborate drawings, sometimes delicate and similar to lace-work, or lush, rich and clogging up the paper with thick sticky ink, using a spirograph wheel from her childhood. For **Helen Flanagan** the game of Chinese whispers became an inspiration for the production process of her series of nine intriguing prints. Each print evolves from the previous one, giving plenty of room to experiment and for chance. **Eduardo Padilha's** sculptural work is also based on a game, the old Brazilian sport of Peteca, which is still very popular in this country. For **Beata Rafflewska** and **Michael Ward** childhood toys became a point of departure. While Michael depicts his four surviving toy soldiers in delicate watercolors, Beata's sculpture *A forgotten melody of my childhood* emerged from her memories of music boxes that she liked as a child but never owned. **Jane Fairhurst** uses mass-produced children's toys as a material to create her ambiguous and darkly humorous pieces. **Daniel Lehan** is going to play a game with people walking along Stoke Newington Church Street on Saturday November 27, the day of our private view. Small pieces of driftwood with his instructions will be found in various locations all along the street. **Hondartza Fraga** constructs clandestine interiors that can only be seen on a screen of CCTV camera. **Bele Albrecht's** tiny figures of plasticine - the same plasticine that is used by children for playing - use no language for their communication, only their body. The marionette by **Helén Edling** is directly connected with the idea of theatre, only here we don't have a traditional 'puppet-master and passive audience' situation: everyone can pull the strings and become part of the show. **John Strutton's** *Sixstring* is bound with music, which is play in its purest form. For **Marcus Cope** the play-factor unquestionably defines all his process of artistic creation. The notions of the figurative versus the abstract, of a painting versus an object, of the content versus the form become parts of his sophisticated game. **Walter Swennen's** practice is also inseparable from playing with media, themes, styles and meanings.

---

<sup>1</sup> EEL PROJECTS is the curatorial collaboration of Elisabed Chachkhiani, Leonie Grainger and Elena Martsenko