This Cup Brimmeth Over

6/08/10 • Arts & Culture

Tribeca has no shortage of places to watch the World Cup. Besides the locations one might expect (Warren 77, Mudville 9, the bars on Murray Street), many high-end restaurants—Macao Trading Co., Blaue Gans, Plein Sud—are bringing out the TVs, and even opening as early as 7 a.m. to show matches live. And then there’s Puma City at the Seaport, with nine flat-screens, an afternoon soccer field, and a weekly dance party (to, er, practice your footwork?).

The most intellectual option, however, is Apexart. From June 10 to July 11, the Church Street gallery will host an exhibit called “Men With Balls”: The space is being transformed into “the perfect football environment,” where anyone can come watch the games while surrounded by soccer-related art; there will also be talks and events. From the release: “The World Cup is a spectacle in the strictly Situationist sense. It is a shiny display of nations in symbolic, atavistic national combat adorned with multiple layers of commodification, sponsorship, and the seemingly infinite commercialization. It is an image of our age at its worst and most gaudy. But it is also something more, something bound up with difficult and recalcitrant questions of conflict, memory, history, place, social class, masculinity, violence, national identity, tribe, and group. The hope of the exhibition “Men With Balls” is to construct a unique situation where these questions can be ruminated on collectively.” The opening reception is this Thursday, June 10, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The shebang—or hebang, I’ll predict—is curated by Simon Critchley. An English philosopher who specializes in religious and political disappointment, he currently teaches at the New School. He agreed to answer a few questions.

Is there much of an overlap between the worlds of art and football? The working-class-ness* (for lack of a real word?) of the latter seems at odds with the rarifiedness of the former.

The origins of this show come from a passion for football shared with some artists I know, like Philippe Parreno and Liam Gillick. Also, not all art is so rarified and

* I later realized that this presupposition was flawed. While European soccer fans used to be predominantly working-class, the sport has increasingly been a way to prove you’re salt of the earth—reverse snobism, if you will. That’s probably more so in the U.S., at least for white Americans. (Do working-class white Americans care about soccer? Surely not the way American immigrants of all economic levels do.) See what happens when you talk to a philosopher about these things?