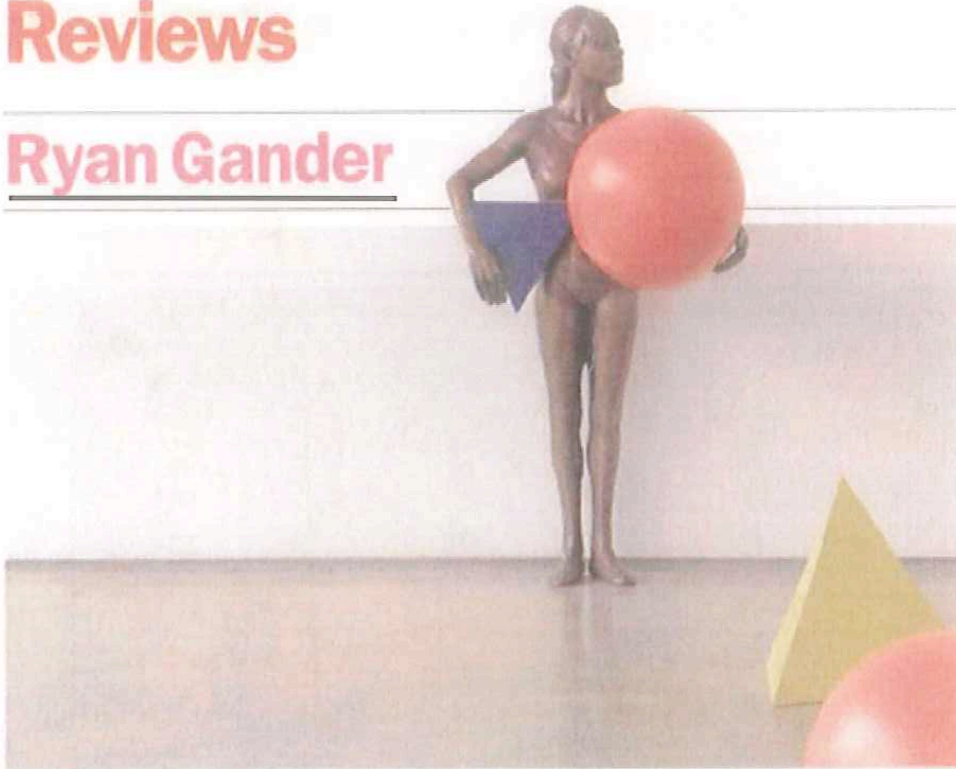


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## Reviews

### Ryan Gander



*'You Walk into a Space, Any Space, Or, Poor Girl Beaten by a Game', 2010*

★★★★★

**Lisson Gallery** Soho to Hampstead

Most objects don't contain enigmas, or jokes, but it's one of the legacies of conceptual art that objects can stand as signposts for ideas and histories outside of them. Ryan Gander's first solo show at Lisson is full of objects that perform witty, in-joke games with the history of modernism, while turning the space of the art gallery into a place that is jovially, sceptically self-conscious of its own purpose. In the downstairs gallery, a modified take on Degas's 'Little Dancer' sculpture stands holding a large red sphere and a blue tetrahedron, while other cubes and pyramids lie scattered, like a child's learning toys, across the floor. Amid them, a big white plinth looks embarrassed and empty: the little bronze masterpiece has got down to play with the funkier geometry of twentieth-century modernism.

A neon in the window reads 'm\_ssage', with the second letter broken and illegible. It's not a 'massage' parlour, then, but neither is it a short-circuit of any 'message'. The upstairs gallery is filled with a thicket of longbow arrows, which looks amazing, while the lengthy title hints at a discussion between arch-modernists Van Doesburg and Mondrian on the diagonal line – the direction which all these arrows have in common. Gander knows that once you see an idea in a thing, it's hard to see it otherwise. But to indulge oneself in the game of knowing the stories these objects contain is to become part of an in-crowd delighting in art's forgotten legacies. Gander's work seems to celebrate the redundancy of making art about art as an unguilty pleasure – but maybe making grander claims for contemporary art would simply be dishonest, and not as fun to look at. *JJ Charlesworth*