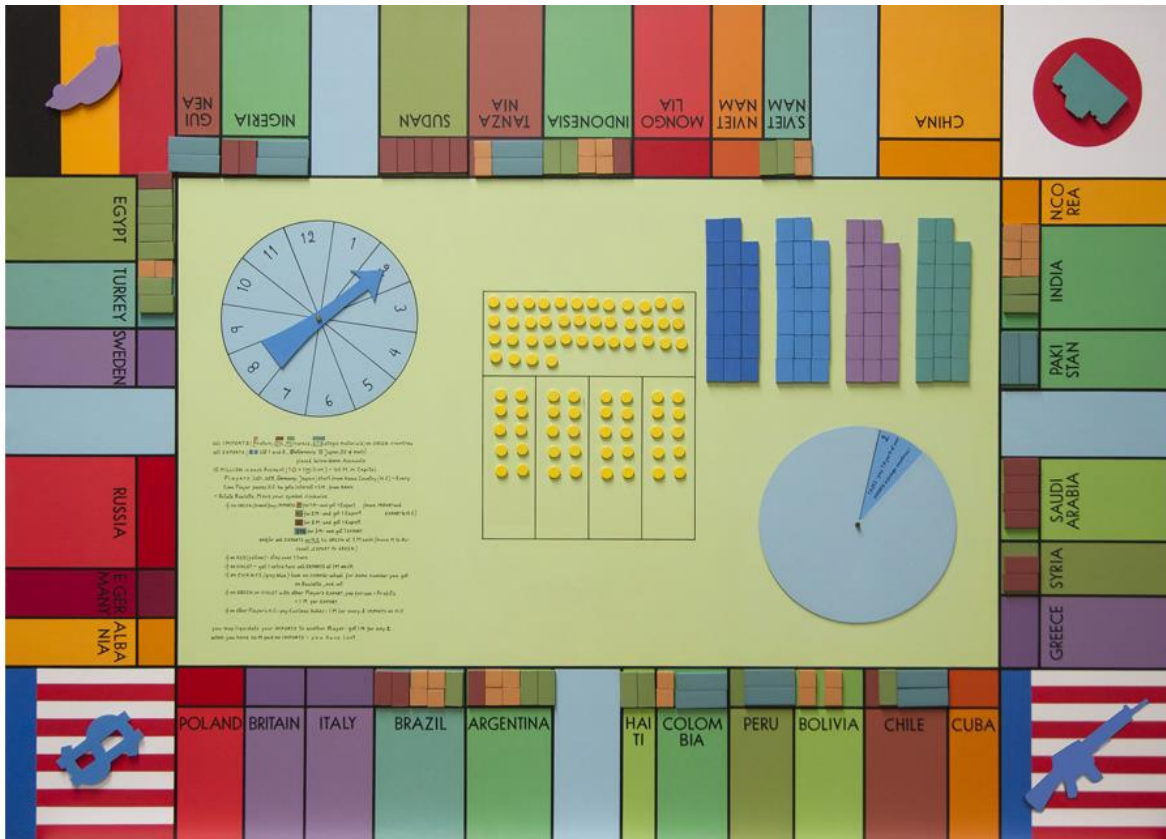


"Simon Evans & Öyvind Fahlström "First we make the rules, then we break the rules" at Kunsthalle Dusseldorf," *ArtDaily*, April 2, 2014

## Simon Evans & Öyvind Fahlström "First we make the rules, then we break the rules" at Kunsthalle Dusseldorf



Öyvind Fahlström, *World Trade Monopoly (B, large)*, 1970. Variables Gemälde. Magnet-Elemente, Acryl, Vinyl und Metall auf Karton / Variable painting. Magnetic elements, acrylic, vinyl and metal on board.

Both Simon Evans (b. 1972) and Öyvind Fahlström (1928–1976) have developed separate cartographies of the world with the eyes of a traveller. Evans largely produces psycho-geographical maps that enable him to define his own position and location within his environment; beginning with the personal, illuminating common human shortcomings and desires. Fahlström is interested in the laws governing the collective that are reflected in Pop cultural visual worlds and in the accumulation of political and economic data. He composed artworks often using variable elements and formed politically charged information into complex geopolitical maps that reveal global injustices. The variability of the elements and the game as the basis of the artwork clearly show the world can be fundamentally altered by the individual. Both Fahlström and Evans motivate the viewer to rethink his position, whether

## JAMES COHAN GALLERY

within the global play of power or in the quotidian. They also make generous use of sarcasm and irony in their analyses, with the result that Evans is far removed from sentimental self-adulation and Fahlström's work never approaches political propaganda. The formal ingenuity of these artists, both of whom utilise collage and fragmentation, is impressive. Fahlström treats the abundance of visual information in labyrinthine structures, combining appropriated images with invented forms or creating dreamlike sequences when, for example, the floating figures in *Green Pool* coalesce in ever new constellations. Evans' observations have an almost ephemeral and delicate character. Just as the external and internal world overlap in the collages, layers of text and image similarly overlap. Tiny snippets of paper cut out of notebooks, everyday elements, drawings, erasures and overpastings result in a concentrated network of elements. Traces of time, the flow of ideas as well as the awareness about the impossibility of fixation are consequently also reflected in formal terms in Evans' works. He simultaneously counteracts Situationist activities with concrete instructions, findings and assertions. The exhibition curated by Elodie Evers and Magdalena Holzhey focuses on maps, floorplans and playing fields or, in Fahlström's case, on works which actually function as games. The artists use these classifications in order to structure complex contexts. They undermine at the same time the usual means of systemisation despite employing their methods in terms of form. In other words: by setting up their own rules, they break the rules of the systems established by others. First we make the rules, then we break the rules – it is a claim that Evans redeems by way of the supposed typing error on the invitation and catalogue cover both in terms of its literal as well as its figurative meaning. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue published by the Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König that features numerous colour illustrations, a foreword by Elodie Evers and Magdalena Holzhey, an interview with Simon Evans by Elodie Evers in addition to essays by Raphael Rubinstein and Maibritt Borgen. "The decisive factor is that I as an 'artist,' and I and others as 'human beings,' are at every moment of our lives confronting what we see as the absolute rigidity of appearances, and adjusting our own variation-possibilities accordingly. There is here a fundamental and inexhaustible tension." Öyvind Fahlström