



As this wacky 3D court from Inges Idee in Munich proves, the various ways basketball-playing surfaces can be re-made in the interest of creating thought-provoking works of art are nearly limitless (above).

The GOAT basketball player (Michael Jordan) deserved a GOAT photographer to chronicle his career. Lucky for MJ—and his fans—Walter Iooss Jr. was there every step of the way (opposite).



players, cool urban backdrops, or the ubiquitous hoop as muses, different photographers have also experimented with exposure time, fused action photos with other types of art, and narrowed in (or pulled out to the sky in the case of drone photographers) to capture the tightest textures of a basketball and the widest angles of the court's geometric patterns.

The influence of basketball on contemporary art extends well beyond the confines of the court and the camera. In recent years, we have seen artists creating installations, sound art, and performance pieces that draw inspiration from the aesthetics, rhythm, and cultural impact of basketball. These multidisciplinary expressions engage audiences in novel ways, transforming everyday sporting elements into immersive artistic experiences. Sound artists have created compositions that incorporate the rhythmic bouncing of balls, the squeak of sneakers on the court, and the swish of the net. These audio installations immerse listeners in the auditory landscape of the game, highlighting sounds often overlooked in the visual spectacle of basketball.

Performance artists have used basketball as a medium for exploring themes of competition, teamwork, and physical

endurance. From 2014–2018, a basketball opera, *Bounce*, was performed in Brooklyn, NY, and then Lexington, KY, serving as “a modern take on the Icarus legend,” in the words of producer Ardea Arts. “Centered on Ike ‘The Flight’ Harris, *Bounce* charts the triumphs and tragedies that basketball dreams bring. *Bounce* asks: what does

it take to work through trauma and tragedy to rise again, to regain one’s full self? The answer lies in the game of basketball itself.”

And as far back as 1996, artist Suzanne Lacy organized *No Blood / No Foul*, a performance piece that brought together Oakland police officers and local youth for a game of street basketball with constantly changing rules. This work used the framework of a basketball game to address social issues and foster dialogue between different community groups.

No Blood / No Foul is part of a heritage of basketball art that arguably means more than any other aspect—the way the sport is used as a platform for social and political commentary. Artworks that incorporate basketball imagery often serve as vehicles for political expression, addressing issues ranging from racial injustice and inequality to urban decay and the fight for social reform.

PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE LONG BEEN DRAWN TO THE SPORT'S DYNAMIC MOVEMENTS AND THE RAW ENERGY OF BOTH PROFESSIONAL GAMES AND STREET BASKETBALL.