

Review of Slow Sports Outdoors

incomprehensible and yet so recognizable

A large lawn, in the middle of the velodrome. Bright green.

A clear day although some showers about an hour ago.

All of a sudden, from behind the fences jumps in a bunch of sportspeople.

I count twenty-three.

Boys and girls, dressed in shirts and shorts in all kinds of colors, some with sports shoes, others barefoot.

Football players? But I can't distinguish two teams...

Then I see two extra large balls; a yellow and a blue one.

The athletes spread all over the field, get into a waiting position and look in one direction - where nothing is happening. I'm intrigued what is going to take place; recognize a setting but not the game.

Then a first player starts running towards the center of the field. Then stops and runs backwards again. And then again forward and backwards, several times. With exactly the same acceleration and de-acceleration. The other players remain motionless and watch him do it. Except one of them, who starts a movement himself - forward and backwards. And then another one, and another one. Each time exactly the same movements are repeated. Like on video in a repetition mode. The same sequences are done again and again until all of the athletes (dancers in fact) are running, dancing, turning around and jumping all over the field.

Some run behind a ball, some just seem to have other preoccupations. But all of them act with precise movements and with striking involvement. They remind me of the Monty Python philosophers in that famous football game: they hesitate, turn back to their starting position, stop, make strange, unusual motions, focused but in a game completely unknown to us, spectators.

Is it football or rugby?

Then they clearly switch to fencing, and from there on that to tug of war, ...

How odd to perceive something perfectly under control, yet completely incomprehensible.

It's like watching cricket to me: it always amazes me how the logic of the game escapes me totally - I don't understand one single action of it.

At the same time Albert Quesada's choreography looks strangely familiar. They are playing games, there is no doubt about it, but we just ignore the rules. And strangely enough we keep on watching it with the same attention as if we saw a real football match - we are ready like to scream 'goal!' or 'go for it!'. But then suspension that is build up transforms into yet another sport: fencing again now, first with two players, then with four, six, ..., all of them. A rugby team fencing...

On and on it goes: from one unknown but somehow recognizable common action to another.

Absurd, and fascinating to look at. Playful and humorous. Pure fun.

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