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Relational aesthetics, Ping-Pong and Susan Sarandon

Posted in Art, Own This City by James Lee on January 30th, 2009 at 3:49 pm



You don't normally think of art types as athletic—more likely, they were the ones with a doctor's note at gym class. But just days prior to the Super Bowl, we witnessed the art world's sporty side at NyeHaus, an unconventional gallery tucked away inside the stuffy National Arts Club on Gramercy Park. The main attraction: Ping-Pong on a shiny steel table designed by artist Rirkrit Tiravanija (which we previously mentioned [here](#)).

Known as an exemplar of "relational aesthetics," Tiravanija makes art that, at its best, is social and participatory. Visitors were invited to take turns at the table during last night's opening. We gave it a go, and were quickly defeated by ringers, such as teen sensations Brandon and Brad Belle, and 79-year-old Marty Reisman, author of *The Money Player*, about his life as a table-tennis hustler. Plus, none other than Susan Sarandon was there, speaking with one visitor about her role as an investor in Spin NY, an extra-large Ping-Pong parlor set to open its doors this spring.



But more about this table: It's for sale and all yours for only \$40,000. Unfortunately, the price is pegged to the price of steel, according to Nathalie Karg, who oversaw the table's production for Cumulus Studios. Fabricated in Berlin, it was

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transported to Miami in time for its debut at the NADA Art Fair last fall. Ideally, you're meant to put the table in your garden, where its surface will reflect the sun and sky. Another outdoor object Cumulus makes is a tire swing with a 24-karat gold chain by artist Aaron Young. We'll hold out for the diamond-crusted barbecue grill. —*Emily Bailin and Tim Paul*

"Rirkrit Tiravanija: Reflection" can be seen by appointment Tuesdays–Saturdays through Feb 21. For the duration of the show, you can arrange to have Ping-Pong lessons with East Coast champion Ernesto Ebuén. Visit nyehaus.com for more information.

All photographs courtesy [Melissa Soltis](#)

Tags: [Ernesto Ebuén](#), [mirror ping pong table](#), [NyeHaus](#), [Rirkrit Tiravanija](#), [Susan Sarandon](#)



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