

**Artist:** Alby Alamo

**Exhibition title:** Perfect 10

**Venue:** La Regenta Art Center, Canary Islands, Spain

**Date:** May 19 – July 9, 2016

**Photography:** Maria Leon

**Exhibition text:**

At the Montréal Olympics of 1976, Nadia Comăneci, a fourteen-year-old Romanian gymnast, performed a routine on the uneven bars which was awarded a perfect 10.00. This was the first perfect score ever achieved in history. At the time, the Olympic scoreboard was only able to display three digits, so, to the puzzlement of the crowd, the figure displayed for Comăneci was 1.00. After some confusion, the judges made clear that the gymnast had performed a perfect exercise, and was hence entitled to a perfect score.

The Swiss watchmaker Omega, one of the sponsors of the Olympiad, had consulted the organisers and been told that three digits would be enough for the scoreboards, because nobody had ever exceeded a score of 9.99. At those Olympic Games, Nadia Comăneci achieved a total of seven perfect 10s, and has since been hailed as one of the best gymnasts in history. Later, she left her mark in a quite different but equally significant way: in 1989, just weeks before the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime, she defected to the United States.

The exhibition PERFECT 10 revolves around the idea of the body in the postcapitalist age. The milieu of sport is laid before us as a symbolic ideal to be followed in our competitive globalised world. There is a constant appeal to improve oneself and achieve new goals every day. It is morally suspect to waste our time to no purpose; we are under a duty to extract an increasing return from every aspect of our lives – work, love, sex – and this sets the parameters of our predominant values.

After the Second World War, the Protestant work ethic was powerfully revived at the scale of the individual. That ethic has ever since established a mass rule over men and women: in their relationship with their bodies, their passions, and their lives, which they must economise at all costs. All our movements must have an end in mind; they must be directed to achieving a goal, making progress in a career, winning the perfect 10. We are not allowed to throw in the towel. We are to treat our body like a machine, which needs to be trained, repaired, suitably greased, appropriately rested. And, above all, we must do this in a shared fashion: visibly, publicly.

This ideal pervades our entire imagination, fusing with the ordinary, the expected, “the done thing”. As against that formlessness, the “glitch” stands in a given position and creates an altered state. According to Wikipedia, a “glitch” in a computer program or a videogame is an error that, as it does little to detract from the performance, playability or stability of the app or the game, falls short of being a bug or fault – it is just an unexpected feature. So a glitch is a break in a closed system. But it is not big enough to bring the system down. Rather, it creates a crack that lets us glimpse the inner structure. The inner workings of that scoreboard which will never be ready to display a perfect 10.

**Checklist:**

**110m Hurdles**, 50 x 40 cm, Acrylic on canvas and telescopic prop, 2015

**Fall**, 30 x 20 cm, Foam and color digital print, 2016

**Pole vault**, 150 x 100 cm, Acrylic on canvas and bicycle wall mount, 2016

**Chroma Key**, 295 x 195 cm, Green Screen canvas on two dumbbells, 2016

**Sweats**, Three printed towels hanging and climbing holds, Dimensions variable, 2016

**Citius, altius, fortius**, 6' 56", HDV, 2016

**System ohne Schatten**, 3' 13", HDV and fitness machine, 2016

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