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Chess Set, by Simon Hasan. 2012. Patinated brass, screenprinted leather, hot-rolled steel.

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## Games at Gallery Libby Sellers

Exhibit

London

05 July 2012

**An homage to a 1940s modernist art exhibition, the new show from Gallery Libby Sellers brings together a collection of elegant riffs on the traditional chess board that were first unveiled at Design Miami / Basel in June**

"Throughout the summer the Olympics is going to dominate London," says Libby Sellers, the curator of Games and founder of Gallery Libby Sellers. "This show is our take on that. It's an intellectual olympiad rather than a sporting one."

Games is an exhibition of chess sets, the majority of which have been specially commissioned. The works are familiar - all are functioning game boards - but each provides a new twist on the classical form of a chess board.

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Some sets explore the rules of chess. [Rolf Sachs'](#) Weighing up the Competition converts individual pieces into brass weights, each piece weighted according to its value. A queen is 900g; a pawn only 100g. A similar idea runs through Studio Frith's Paper Chess, a sheet of paper printed like a chess board. On top of the paper, gamers play using spare change instead of pieces. A beginner's guide runs across the back of the sheet: "KING - £1. QUEEN - 50p. ROOK - 5p."

Other works focus on materials. Peter Marigold's Log Chess Set is played with rough-cut wedges of foraged branches, while Simon Hasan's Chess Set features bishops, knights and pawns shaped from a single rod of patinated brass.

Games was inspired by The Imagery of Chess, an exhibition held at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York in 1944. Together with Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp, Levy invited a collection of artists to create their own take on a chess set. Figures such as Man Ray, Isamu Noguchi and Alexander Calder were among those who responded to the call. In a similar vein Sellers worked with designer Simon Hasan to develop the concept of the show.

"It was just such a wonderful idea," says Sellers. "I fell in love with the concept of creating a chess salon and wanted to pay homage to that original event. If you look at the names involved, it really was a who's who of modernist artists."

"There have been so many attempts by designers in the past to redesign the chess board," says Sellers. "Games is following in that tradition: we don't own the copyright on creating chess boards. There's something about the mathematical strategy behind chess that attracts designers. Perhaps it's because it's so challenging. Designers love to be challenged."

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Text: Oli Stratford

**Games is on until 18 August, 2012**

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