There's A Car Spinning On The Ceiling At This Trippy Exhibition About Rave Culture

Sweet Harmony, Saatchi Gallery ★★★☆



BY TABISH KHAN



Watch the car gyrate to a thumping soundtrack. @ Justin Piperger, 2019 Image courtesy of Saatchi Gallery, London

An upside down Lotus car spins from the ceiling, brake lights on, gyrating in rhythm to a thumping soundtrack. The work by Conrad Shawcross is the scene-stealer in Saatchi Gallery's exhibition on rave culture, but it's by no means the only eye-catching thing here.

We start at a petrol pump which glows and pulsates with different coloured lights. With the thud of music audible from the other rooms, it imitates the petrol

stations where people would congregate before driving to abandoned warehouses. A hole has been made in a chain link fence to recreate the idea of sneaking into an illegal rave. Ducking through the gap, I momentarily forget that I'm in a remarkably well-heeled part of town.



Time to fuel up with the pulsating lights.

A smiley face on plastic strip curtains lets me know I'm in the right place as I enter the rest of the exhibition, a fun welcome into the world of raving — credit to the curators for making the whole experience immersive from the start.

The club scene is maintained, with photographs plastered across the walls by various artists who have captured rave and club scenes, from blissed out faces to grungy warehouses. Among the photos, James Alec Hardy's screens suspended in hammocks broadcast psychedelic visuals, with a trippy result.



Screens in hammocks hit us with psychedelic visuals.

Raves need music, and there's plenty playing throughout the show. Spotify listening stations have plenty of tracks on offer, or for a dose of nostalgia, there's

a mixing deck and broad selection of vinyl for sale in one of the galleries covering all tastes, whether trance or happy hardcore is your jam.

A small section on protest feels too light, tacked on as an afterthought, but ultimately we're here for the party vibe and any small niggles can be forgiven given the exhibition's ambition. Ending my visit in a room with mist and laser lights, I find myself moving to the beat, forgetting that it's midday on a Thursday in Chelsea.



Plenty of music to listen to in this show. © Justin Piperger, 2019 Image courtesy of Saatchi Gallery, London

Stepping out of Saatchi Gallery into the sunshine reminds me of stumbling out of clubs in my younger years, only to realise that the sun had come up and it was now tomorrow. You can't get more immersive than that.

Sweet Harmony: Rave Today is on at Saatchi Gallery until 14 September 2019. Tickets are £10.

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