



‘There’s a spinning sculpture at a Mayfair gallery – and it’ll blow your mind’

‘As it picks up speed, the lights dim, the flora and fauna becoming a blur, before the lights cut out completely, total darkness. Then bang! The lights snap back on, strobing and pulsing, and suddenly the whole thing comes alive – the birds are moving, they’re strutting and puffing out their feathers, hovering, sipping nectar from the flowers which open and close around them. It’s a living, physical cinema, and it’s mesmerising...’

— *Eddy Frankel*

IT'S SORT OF like the world's most elaborate wedding cake. The zoetrope in one-time YBA Mat Collishaw's new show is a tiered construction dotted with pastel flowers and preening birds. Slowly, the cake starts to spin. As it picks up speed, the lights dim before cutting out completely, total darkness. Then bang! The lights snap back on, strobing and pulsing, and suddenly the whole thing comes alive – the birds are moving, they're strutting and puffing out their feathers, hovering, sipping nectar from the flowers which open and close around them. It's a living, physical cinema, and it's mesmerising, hallucinatory; the blinking lights stutter nauseatingly, turning this grandiose display into a deeply uncomfortable visual experience.

But this isn't just drama for theatricality's sake – the birds are a symbol of vanity, sexual bravado for evolution's sake. It's a metaphor, innit: we're all so obsessed with the surface that we're spinning away from what's inside. Deep shit.

The other work here is a haunting 3D projection of an ancient tree in Sherwood Forest – though it should have died centuries ago, the oak has been propped up with steel crutches and chains, forced to exist far beyond its limits. It hovers in black and white, a spectre begging to be allowed to die.

You get the feeling that Collishaw is a man struggling: accepting his own vanity, but not knowing how to change it, trying to grasp at a sense of his self, but constantly losing his grip. Most people just go on a yoga retreat or buy a Ferrari, but this is a much more aesthetic way of dealing with a crisis. ■

Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
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SHOW OF THE WEEK

Mat Collishaw

★★★★★

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WHAT IS IT...
A mesmerising mechanical animation, ruminating on vanity and evolution.

WHY GO...
It'll hypnotise you, put you under its spell, and never let you go.

Blain Southern.
Oxford Circus. Until May 27. Free.

DISCOVER!

Before the internet, you had to find



By Eddy Frankel
Who thought Zoo Trope was a posh girl he went to uni with.