

INSTALLATION AND FILM

MATT STOKES – PILLS TO PURGE MELANCHOLY

The Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, until 16 September ●●●●●

Fascinated by sub-cultures and underground movements, Becks Futures winner Matt Stokes is a fitting choice to represent the Collective Gallery in the Edinburgh Art Festival (and Annuale). Stokes' investigations have led him in many directions, most recently towards the 1990s illegal 'Cave Raves' in the Lake District in the ongoing artwork 'Real Arcadia (begun 2003). His musings have amassed diverse paraphernalia ranging from t-shirts, posters, hand-mixed tapes and obsessively re-constructed speakers, along with articles and news reports. What emerges is an in-depth homage which is compellingly alienating, though it takes time to figure out what the artists' personal involvement here actually is, making this more an arrangement of impartial information than a cultural reflection.

By contrast the sensuous DVD 'Long After Tonight' (2005), based on research into the music scenes of Dundee goes way beyond homage, obscurely placing Northern Soul dancers in a Scottish Episcopalian Church. To an ambient soundtrack, close shots of religious iconography are juxtaposed with an eclectic range of ecstatic dancers from sweaty, shaven muscled men to women in swirling skirts. With a closing shot of church exterior just as dawn breaks, we are left imagining this fiction-fantasy lasting till morning, unbeknown to the street beyond. In the same vein 'Sacred Selections' is an unfinished piece combining two alternate cultures. Experimental music ranging from happy hardcore to Black Metal from underground Edinburgh collective Fimbuletvr has been transcribed for pipe organ, to be performed at St Giles Cathedral on 24 Aug, allowing Stokes to meld together another unexpected pairing. (Rosie Lesso)

Real Arcadia

