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Chris Long, "Biennial artist Mark Leckey creates 'false memoir'," *BBC News*, July 14, 2016



Biennial artist Mark Leckey creates 'false memoir'

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Artist Mark Leckey has a fascination with images, with the power of TV and film, and with the experience of going clubbing - a mix which won him the Turner Prize in 2008 and which he has returned to for his latest work, *Dream English Kid 1964-1999 AD*.

The work, a video installation for the Liverpool Biennial, is a collage of TV programmes, channel idents, information films and footage of young people clubbing between the years mentioned in the title.

Leckey says it was made with "found footage, a lot of which is pirated", which he has used to create "a false memoir".

Speaking to BBC Front Row the 52-year-old says it is an attempt to "approximate my past, my autobiography through everything that I could find" and deal with something that his generation knows

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well, the feeling of being caught between "the analogue and the digital world" and having their pasts resurrected as "collective memory" online.

"I'm not the only one who talks about [the internet] being haunted - it feels spooky," he says.

"There's something uncanny about it, to find all these memories that you've carried around your whole life.



The film uses TV programmes, channel idents, information films and footage of people clubbing

"You can get stuff from YouTube and Vimeo, on DVD - all that stuff is available now [along with] the software to be able to rip that stuff and put it on your hard drive.

"Basically, in the work, I'm saying these things affected me in this way, did they have the same effect on you?

"It's a piece of rhetoric."

That hope, to find "some kind of connection" between the artist and his audience is underlined by the setting for the work, in a room down a "disorientating" corridor at a club.

Leckey says by making the room dark, what he was trying to do was "make it disappear as much as possible".

"In a way, I'm trying to replicate my experience with cinema and TV, that sense of just being lost in front of the screen.

"I hope it has a hypnotic power."

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Visitors to the installation enter through a corridor lit with sodium lamps

That power also comes from the use of clubbing in both the film itself and its location.

He says he is drawn back to the subject again and again because of a desire to produce the "same state" in a gallery as one might experience on a dance floor.

"There is a quote I always use from [Victorian essayist] Walter Pater, that 'all art aspires towards the condition of music'.

"What I want from art is that same state, that same ecstatic state.

"I want to be lost. I want people to come in here and see the video and be lost in it.

"Asking for them to be ecstatic is too much, but I want them to be taken out of themselves and be absorbed in this experience.

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"When you're lost in the music and your body overtakes your mind and there's this very mechanical, very repetitive beat going on - there's something about that experience of clubbing.

"To me, it was a kind of precursor to the world we live in now, where the pleasures and desires we gain from things that are very mechanical and technological."

Liverpool Biennial



It is something that many who attended the original venue for the work, the Nation nightclub which housed super club Cream, would have experienced.

The club closed in 2015 and was due to house the film before it was demolished to make way for a redevelopment project.

"The idea was to show it in a part of Cream - in a part called the Sawmill", explains Leckey.

"It's this beautiful old Victorian building that has a flagstone floor.

"I've got these sodium lamps - like the old SOX lamps that you used to have on the motorway - and I was going to have this kind of Lucozade orange glow over these flagstones.

"And then the last time I came up to see it, the night I left, it burnt down."

As a result, the installation moved to the Blade Factory, another of the city's night spots, and an investigation into how the fire began was started by the authorities.

With typical humour, Leckey has his own idea about what happened.

"Police are looking into certain art critics to see where they were", he says with a smile.

The Liverpool Biennial runs until 16 October 2016. Additional reporting by Chris Long.