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## **Pass the Time of Day Until May 14; Collective Gallery, Edinburgh**

In the early 1920s the Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov conducted a famous experiment, inserting identical shots of a blank-faced actor into three contrasting scenes. His audience raved about the man's acting skills, looking hungry at soup, distraught at a coffin, and happy with a cute child. With that, Kuleshov discovered the momentous cinematic truth that meaning was not conveyed by the shot itself, but by its context.

Music can affect our perception even more emphatically. Film can look horribly mundane and naked without its soundtrack, but in one fell stroke a powerful piece of music can elevate the banal to new dramatic heights. With the right music, the viewer's emotional response is guaranteed. With the wrong music, the viewer will cast around in confusion, trying to find meaning in conflicting signals.

That's where the Collective's exhibition comes in. Artist Paul Rooney has brought together a dozen works, mostly around five years old, which deal with the everyday through music. Transformed by its soundtrack, the commonplace becomes special, strange, and disconcerting.

If you're familiar with the Collective's compact and bijou exhibition space, you'll wonder how they can cope with so many sound works squeezed in together. They have in fact coped surprisingly well. With a door especially fitted to separate two rooms, and with headphones judiciously provided here and there, most works manage not to interfere with each other. The only unfortunate exception is Rooney's own piece, which drowns out the subtle nuances of a room installation nearby.

Rooney's work, *In The Distance The Dawn Is Breaking*, consists of five monitors suspended from the ceiling. On them are dim images of empty shops at night-time, so generic that they could be in any town or city. Wistful chanting accompanies the suffocating images; the words are descriptions of the overnight dreams of the shops' staff. It's as if the souls of these poor, frustrated employees are trapped below the ceiling of the gallery, unable to float away and escape the frigid reality of their shop-bound existences.

Stephen Sutcliffe employs a similar approach in *Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I*

Want. Shelf-stackers trudge around a closed supermarket while the Smiths song of the same name pumps through the tannoy. Without the music, this video would be nothing more than documentary. With Morrissey's song, it's suddenly dripping with melancholy lyricism.

The transformative power of music is even more apparent in Rosalind Nashashibi's film of 2001, *Open Day*. Ordinary scenes are presented on shaky, hand-held, grainy film, and the minute the music starts your perception of them changes. Take the enthusiasts on the climbing wall; at first the scene is full of natural creaks and shouts, and the skinny guys, all elbows and knees, look a bit ridiculous. When you're hit with a blast of Puccini's opera, *La Bohème*, the figures suddenly appear to be overcoming all odds in a battle with gigantic forces.

There's nothing gigantic about Falkirk band, Arab Strap's lyrics. "I don't think I'll need a jacket," the lead singer intones, as he heads out to the park with his bottle of economy cider. A non-descript weekend in Falkirk, seen through his eyes, becomes almost beautiful in a muted, unexpected way. Rooney has included two Arab Strap songs in the exhibition, ignoring conventional boundaries between art and music.

Croatian composer Marko Ciciliani finds beauty in the sounds we ignore every day. For his room installation, *Home*, he has recorded the ambient noise from his Amsterdam flat: children shouting, dogs barking, people on the stairs and doors banging. The six speakers on each wall, ceiling and floor, convey the sounds to you in the Collective's bare project room.

As I sit in one of the three chairs provided, I hear foot-steps thumping on the ceiling. Are these the real feet of an Edinburgher, or the virtual feet of Ciciliani's Amsterdam neighbour? The uncertainty disarms me: I feel sucked into a no-man's land between two physical spaces. I am projected into that room in Amsterdam, even though I only really know about its exterior.

Many sculptors have been more interested in articulating space than the stuff around it – you just have to look at Barbara Hepworth or Naum Gabo, where the wood and perspex moulds the vital element of nothingness. Ciciliani's installation is the sound equivalent, creating a room by shaping the noise outside it.

On the subject of outsides, Mark Leckey will park a car outside the gallery on 14 May with his sound piece playing on the stereo, and Susan Philipsz will surprise visitors to Greyfriars Churchyard with unexpected sounds some time soon. Apparently it's proving difficult to arrange the date, in case some poor,unfortunate wedding party thinks it's collectively hearing voices. Now there's something that doesn't happen every day.

**Catriona Black, Sunday Herald 17.04.05**