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Preview: At Home

A new exhibition in a former residential building at Yorkshire Sculpture Park uses works from Damien Hirst, Barbara Hepworth, Yoko Ono and more to represent visitors' memories of home. Steve Lee visits

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For many, home is bricks and mortar. For others, a street, town or city. And for some home is a far less tangible concept, a sense of comfort, feeling of belonging or even the emotion connected to a solitary possession. It is this rather complex notion which *At Home*, an exhibition drawn from the extensive Arts Council Collection, is to address.

Sited in Yorkshire Sculpture Park's recently refurbished Bothy Gallery – a building once home to the Bretton Hall estate's garden staff – the exhibition will feature over 40 works selected from the 8,000-plus currently residing in the Arts Council Collection. Senior curator Dr Helen Pheby explains how the idea for the showcase came about. "We did a Sophie Ernst exhibition, called *Home*, back in 2012, where she interviewed a number of people who'd been forced from their homes for various political reasons, then built models of these places from their descriptions. This created such interest that we asked visitors to share memories of home with us and used their responses to inspire this new show, which seems all the more pertinent given the current migrant crisis."

Featuring work ranging from the figurative – Duncan Grant's 1956 painting with the self-explanatory title *Flowers Against Chintz* and Roy Lichtenstein's *The Melody Haunts My Reverie* print, for example – to modern, abstract pieces from Yoko Ono (the sculptural *All White Chess Set*) and Damien Hirst's *Relationships*, which features a half-filled glass with floating ping-pong ball, the curatorial aim has been to represent previous visitors' interpretations of home while showcasing the depth and quality of the Arts Council Collection.

One of the more striking works comes from Liverpool-born Paul Rooney. Titled *Flat 23*, the piece comprises a trio of monitors showing the empty interior (one pictured) of the eponymous residence, each with accompanying soundtrack, and was originally commissioned during 2002 as part of a project documenting tower blocks in Rooney's home city that were scheduled for demolition.

"It was initially going to be a memorial for the flats themselves," explains Rooney. "When I talked to the flat's owner, Doreen Hughes, I was interested in recording her voice saying something quite abstract about the objects that used to be in the room. But it turned out her husband, Bernie, had died just as they were moving out so it became a memorial for him and their collective experience in that space."

The soundtrack comprises three channels of voice, playing simultaneously, and is moving and haunting.

"It's almost like a basic choral piece," says Rooney. "It has a very simple, folk-like, repeating melody but is quite mournful and that really works with the visual element to create a little model of a room within a room."

Continuing the room within a room theme, Pheby points out that by using a one-time domestic space such as the Bothy, various works can be displayed in apt settings. "In what was the kitchen there's a sculpture of a fridge by Marcus Taylor alongside a Richard Hamilton print of a toaster. Hopefully people will make those connections within the rooms yet also appreciate how things have often been subverted to varying degrees."

At Home is at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (yssp.co.uk) 19 March-3 July



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