

The Ghost in the Machine

Tate Britain

26 Feb – 26 April

"And more than echoes talk along the walls."

(Alexander Pope)

The Ghost in the Machine presents new interpretations of works of art in the Collections Displays and the Triennial developed by young people aged 16-21 years across London, sculptor Nick Hornby and MOBO winning jazz musician and MC, Soweto Kinch. The resulting gallery interventions and audio trail invite visitors to engage with works of art in new ways: a sonic trail layered with rifts and beats, the line of a painting extended across an entire gallery, graffitied sketches around a Francis Bacon, and a large white plaster sculpture that you can touch and sit in. If in the traditional academy the artists made copies of the masters', these interpretations act as fictions, raising questions about authorship and translation.

"If the artist steps back from the painting (to see it clearer) and sees the room, his shirt on the floor, what he's eaten, the photos of his grand parents, his Starbucks, his politics, his carbon footprint... by spilling out of the frame and onto the walls, I want the viewer to think about how they embody meaning and politics and what they take into a frame." (Nick Hornby)

"I like to think outside the frame, to ask the "wrong" questions, which are often "what if" scenarios. Looking at the Bacon painting Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh IV, I think: What if this painting was part of a cartoon? What if there were bombs going off in the background? What if a cat/a cow/a woman was following the man? What if you made all of the red bits green? What if you could see the guy's face? These questions draw me right into the picture. What if I stopped asking such questions? That's one "what if" I never want to have to contemplate." (Tracy Chevalier, Historic Novelist.)

"[...] derived from a painting by Edward Wadsworth called Dux et Comes [...] for Nick and the Visual Dialogues group it becomes a sculpture, but to me it resembles two pound signs floating in space opposite one another. Maybe that's why I'm an economist and not an artist. Money is the ultimate ghost in the machine, a confidence trick that keeps the physical economy moving. If banks can create money out of thin air when they lend it, and the result is new factories, offices and jobs, they can just as easily destroy it by calling in those loans. Sadly our economy is suffering the very tangible consequences of this apparently abstract process. [...] we may think our society is obsessed with the material, but it is built on a fragile abstraction." (Rupert Harrison, economic advisor to George Osborne.)