

PARIS

MAT COLLISHAW

COSMIC GALERIE

The English artist Mat Collishaw has taken on the dual responsibility of inaugurating the Cosmic Galerie in Paris and of presenting his first one-man show in France. It's not such an easy task. How exactly does one fill 900 square meters of a very particular old 17th-century building, including its underground cellars? Collishaw has opted to allow us to discover the space as though we were riding through a haunted house, adding extra elements that play with perception by manipulating emotions and painful memories.

In the first room is a film showing a fixed shot of Christ on the cross, barely breathing. Soft spasms attack the body; blood flows gently from his brow and wounds. Without any transition, in a second room, brightly lit with white light, there are three large mosaics depicting the face of a woman with silver tears, a cat with clothespins on its ears, and a scene of a lynching in which a black man is tied to a tree, his clothing in tatters.

In the maze of cellars buried in darkness, one of the rooms hosts a series of lightboxes in fragmented Plexiglas with black and white photographs of the sadly infamous Kristallnacht. Further on there is a film of a prostitute; the camera follows her comings and goings in the street, scenes from a daily life lived in the margins. In the last room, somber and low-ceilinged, a spinning wheel stands in front of a video screen on which images appear bit by bit: a woman inserts a syringe into her arm, an allegory for the injection that envelops souls in eternal sleep. This is how Mat Collishaw presents himself to the Parisian public: reframing the problematic of the image, juggling with the evocative strength of the latter and taking great care to leave the spectator no respite. It is an uncompromising work about physical and psychological pain, put forth by the artist with great respect and with no trace of voyeurism.

Laetitia Roux

(Translated from French By Rosemary McKisack)



MAT COLLISHAW, *Sleeping Beauty*, 2002.
DVD loop, video projection, wood, metal,
motor, rubber.