



Exploring a Lynchian reality at David Lynch's MIF exhibition

by Calum Russell



Spanning across the city and covering ground from Yoko Ono to Skepta, Manchester's biennial International Festival is well under way, exploring and celebrating all things creative.

Maxine Peak delves into the life and work of Nico at the Stoller Hall, whilst Phillip Glass helps perform a 'storytelling tapestry' at the Exchange Theatre, discovering the true nature of dreams. The ethereal dreamworld seems to be an unlikely theme threading through the festival. From Glass' performance, to Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's 'Atmospheric Memory' we move on to David Lynch's typically eccentric musings at 'HOME' cinema.

'My head is disconnected' headlines Lynch's exhibition and film programme which spans from July to September, a caption that couldn't do much better to summarise his ideas and ethos. The hanging artwork and cinematic features go hand-in-hand in exploring ideas of absurdity and an ethereal reality. Bulbs of dull light protrude out the canvas, sitting beside large globules of dried paint and what looks like a tiny mummified animal of some sort. A crudely painted woman clutches ahold of a dead bird, the title reads 'woman with small dead bird'. These are visions and thoughts that only Lynch could conjure. Strange messages from a lost soul of another dimension, or alternatively, mutterings from Dale Coopers' disturbing dreams in Lynch's *Twin Peaks*.

It's clear that Lynch works from a very methodical creative foundation, pulling conceptual webs from his mind before casting them over canvas and celluloid. His history as an artist and filmmaker is explored in detail in the 2016 documentary 'David Lynch: The Art Life' that screened this weekend alongside the gallery as part of his collaborative film programme 'It's a great big wonderful world'. Commencing after the end of the festival, the programme contains all of Lynch's cinematic works, as well as a curated pick of his 'True Favourites' including *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Man Without a Past* and Federico Fellini's *8 1/2*.



Dreams, Memory and Illusions encompass the programme and specifically the aforementioned films. Fellini's *8 1/2* synthesises fantasy and filmmaking, utilising the craft to expose such ideas. Similarly, just around the corner from 'HOME' cinema, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's 'Atmospheric Memory' occupies the science and innovation centre. Lozano-Hemmer's project seems to be an extension of Lynch's thoughts and ideas, exploring memory, speech and erosion. Using projections and interactive pieces, the exhibition brings unheard voices to life, preserving that which otherwise expires. Though, the most remarkable exhibit is 'Last Breath', a mechanical contraption that circulates the last breath of American composer Pauline Oliveros, through plastic tubing and a 'breathing' brown paper bag. It takes on a life of its own, following your eye around the room long after visiting it. It's an existential crisis locked up in a paper lunch bag. Both horrific and fascinating, not to mention overtly Lynchian.

Defined by creative extravagance from the realms of dreams and twisted visions, this years exhibitions and performances seem perfectly located. They're rambling thoughts put together with meticulous consideration. Ideas of absurdity ; grounded. Figurative yet strangely tangible in an ethereal reality.

