

DAYDREAMING
WITH **STANLEY**
KUBRICK

Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick © Barnbrook Studio for Somerset House

Stanley Kubrick's disconcerting and uncomfortable cinematic style is tricky to replicate in an exhibition space. But Somerset House's latest show successfully transports its visitors from gallery to film set with its array of multimedia installations inspired by the likes of *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

As visitors snake their way around the West Wing at Somerset House, their senses are attacked by the sound of 114 broken radio transistors, the warmth of a roaring electric fireplace, the sight of a giant penis sculpture and the all-round immersion of a virtual reality space scene.



Requiem for 114 Radios, by Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard. © Toby Farrow

Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick sees 45 artists spanning fields from graphic design and sculpture to filmmaking and object curation recreate scenes from the movies, or interpret Kubrick's more overarching themes of sex, violence, dystopia and the unknown.

By removing text from the walls of the exhibition space and placing it in a succinct booklet instead, Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick provides no distractions for its visitors, holding them captive in rooms with nothing but multi-sensory installations, and breaking down boundaries between curator and visitor.

The exhibition was conceptualised and curated by filmmaker and musician James Lavelle, who began working on the project five years ago, alongside freelancer James Putnam, who came in halfway.

“Lavelle is a DJ, whereas I’m a straightforward art curator,” says Putnam. “I brought in heavy-weight artists while he brought in film-makers and musicians. His skill of mixing music worked well in curation, and meant we came up with something quite progressive.”

Exhibition design was completed by Richard Greenwood, Miska Lovegrove and Mathilde Bretillot, and graphic design by Studio Barnbrook.

While Somerset House's usual photography and graphic design exhibitions are characterised by framed wall pieces alongside descriptions, Putnam explains that this show needed to stand out. It has no text on the walls at all, and instead replaces this with a booklet offering a little explanation on each installation.



Tempest in (a) glass\ a diaphanous arrangement, by Seamus Farrell

“We wanted to make it very different from a conventional art exhibition,” Putnam says. “It had to be an arresting, visceral experience. We were very careful not to make it too interpretative with labels, as we didn’t want people stopping and trying to read them under dim, flickering or strobe lighting.”

This lack of explanation is meant to leave as much to the viewer’s imagination as possible, sometimes to the point of confusion. “There’s this ambiguity to Kubrick’s films, this feeling of a dissatisfactory ending, and never quite knowing what message he’s trying to get across,” says Putnam. “So the show had to be thought-provoking.”

The exhibition makes good use of the museum’s West Wing, assigning some more immersive installations an entire room, whereas others are placed several within the same room but separated by maze-like wall structures within it, adding to the feeling of the unexpected as visitors turn corners.

“We had to think about how we would get 45 artists into that confined space,” says Putnam. “We wanted to make it like a film itself, so that visitors would experience the thrill of a Kubrick film – that disquieting, edgy atmosphere.”



PYRE, by Stuart Haygarth

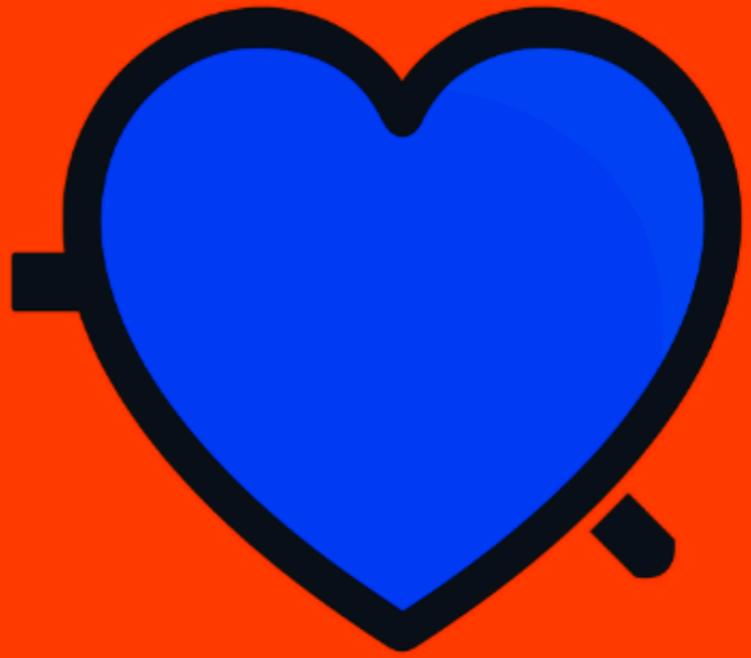
Some of the more arresting installations include Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's dimly lit room filled with 114 crackling analogue radio sets, with old VHS recorders and torn up cassettes added for effect. The individual noises from the radios join together in harmony to produce one voice singing Dies Irae – the eerie Roman Catholic hymn used by Kubrick in the soundtrack of *The Shining* and *A Clockwork Orange*. The atmosphere leaves the viewer with an unnerving feeling of nostalgia mingled with dread and anticipation, while Stuart Haygarth's tower of electric fires sets its room ablaze with heat and gives off a supernatural red glow.



Priapus, by Sarah Lucas

Doug Foster's visual display replicates a scene from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, mesmerising viewers as they watch patterns emerge and change from a central point on the screen, accompanied by a foreboding soundtrack by composer Phillip Shepherd. Chris Levine's LED light display projects a quickly vanishing portrait of Kubrick himself as the viewer looks from side to side, while Sarah Lucas' concrete penis sculpture lying on top of a crushed car is a cheeky nod to Kubrick's interpretation of sex and violence – bleak and sordid, yet laced with dark humour, much like the films themselves.

While the installations take centre stage at the show, Studio Barnbrook's graphic design elements were well-considered with a "simple, direct" approach that purposely did not take away from the effect of the pieces, says Putnam.



The studio created flat, two-dimensional icons which communicate some of the more iconic characters in Kubrick's films – a winking eye, symbolising Alex from *A Clockwork Orange*, and a heart to mark Lolita's heart-shaped sunglasses – which are then used in various formations across advertising posters.

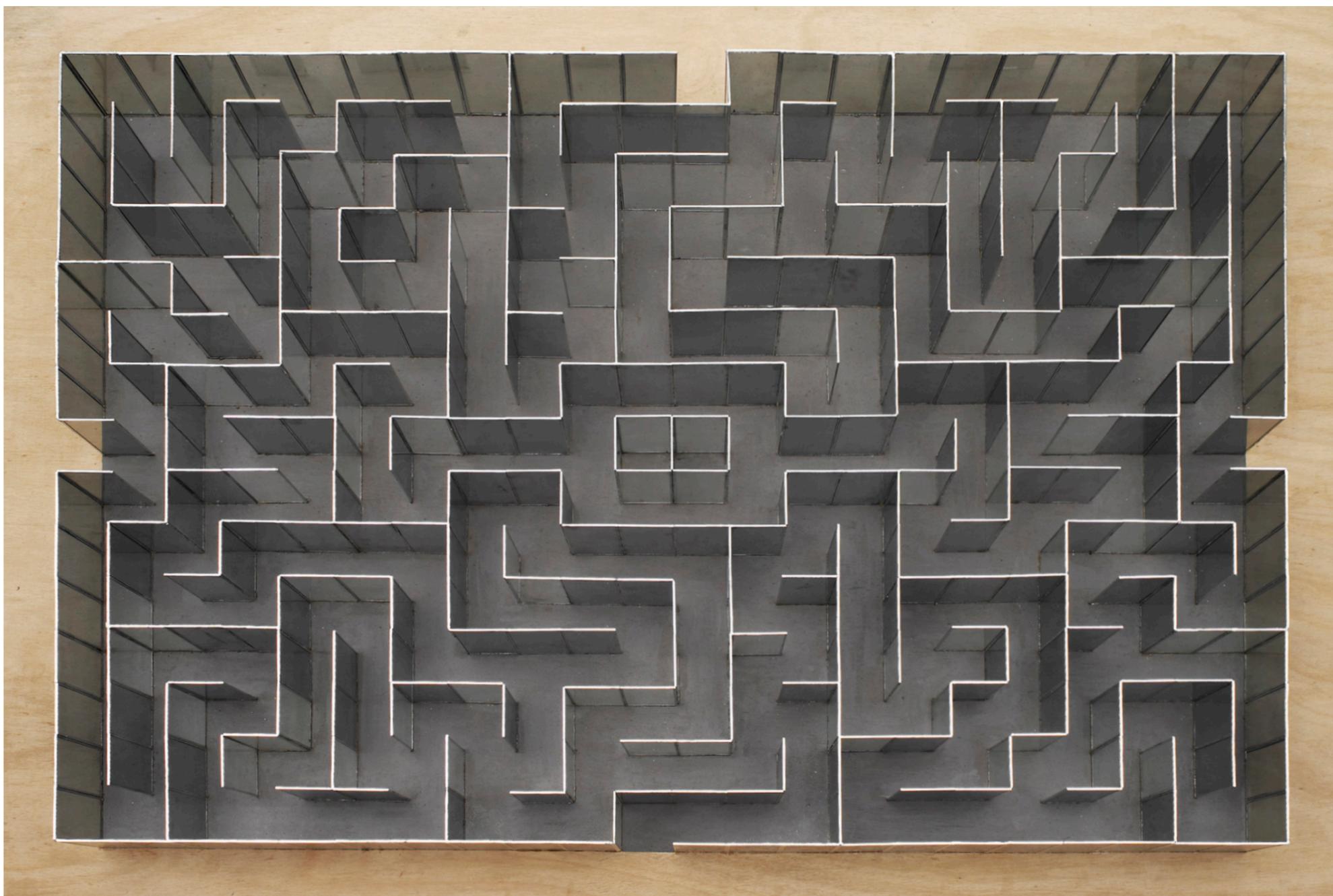
A bright orange colour is used throughout the print and exhibition graphics, and plastered all over the walls, creating a symbolic blank canvas while also drumming home this association with one of Kubrick's best-known films. Complemented by a navy blue, the graphic identity had to be “strong visually”, accompanied by “brief and clear” wayfinding information, says Putnam.

Creating such an immersive experience within a building like Somerset House could not have been an easy task. As a listed site, some installations – a transcript from *The Shining* which adorns the walls of the building's historic Nelson staircase – had to be carefully considered, while others – Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's carpet design taken from *The Shining* – were installed just 10 days before the exhibition opening. But working across disciplines and at times spontaneously, the curators and design teams have put together a fitting show for Kubrick's filmic style – an erratic, perplexing and captivating visitor journey which turns an exhibition into theatre.

Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick will run at West Wing, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA until 24 August. Tickets are £12.50, or £9.50 for concessions.



In Consolus – Full of Hope, by James Lavelle and John Isaacs, featuring Azzi Glasser

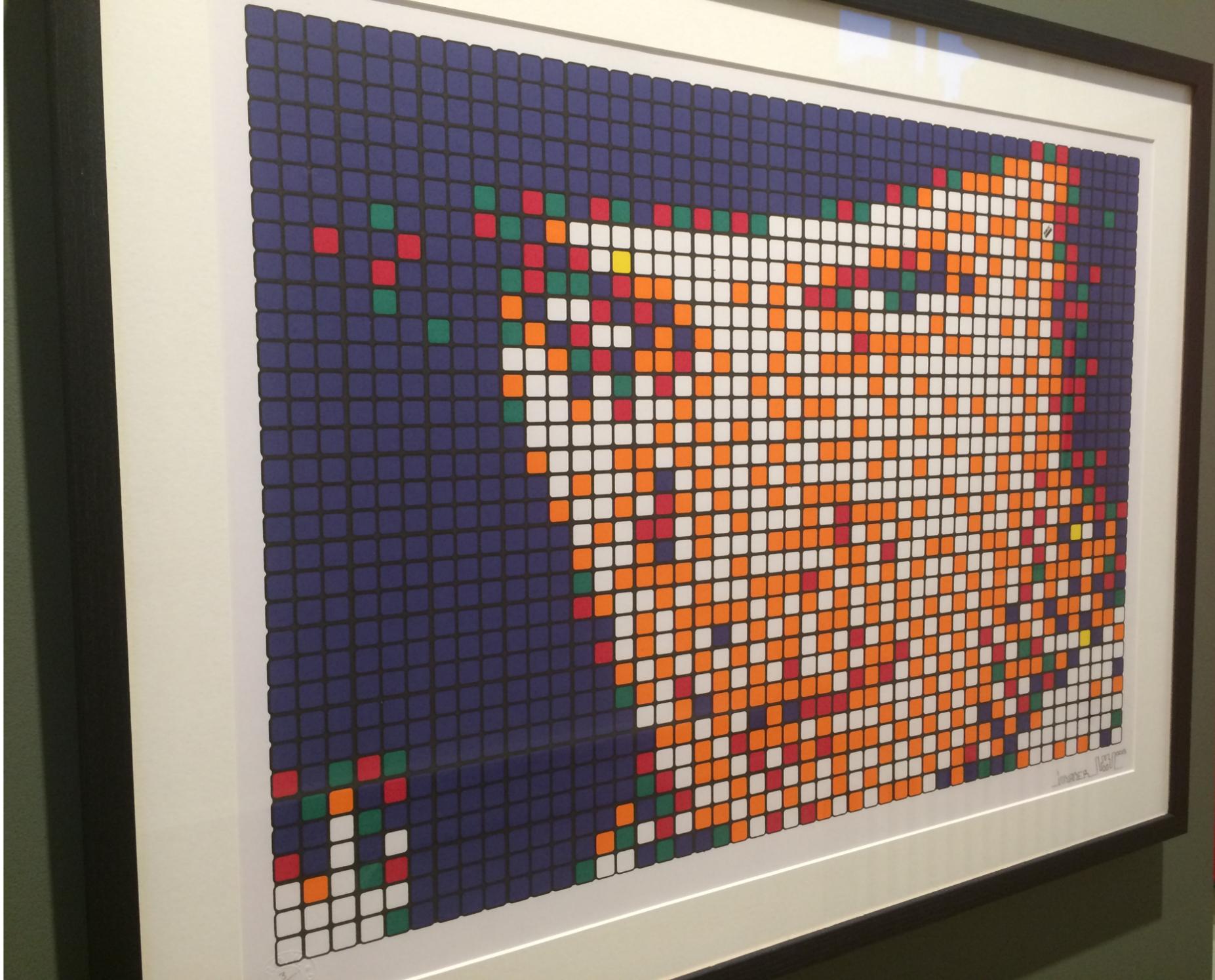




Eye, by Mat Chivers



The Grady Twins, by Nathan Coley



What You Looking At, by Invader



Various works, by Philip Castle. © Warner Bros. Pictures

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