

Chill out to Eno

NICK HACKWORTH | EVENING STANDARD | Friday 23 May 2003 00:00 |



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The Evening Standard

The third in the Science Museum's new series of themed, art-cum-science exhibitions, *Treat Yourself*, explores contemporary and historical attitudes towards healthy living.

In what the curators clearly hoped would be an exciting, cross-cultural juxtaposition, works of art by the likes of Brian Eno, Sophie Calle, Spencer Tunick and Mona Hatoum have been installed alongside more usual museum-style displays, including here, examples of historical medicines, contemporary health manuals and old, public-information posters, to illustrate issues such as sleep, exercise, food and mental health.

Predictably, the art does little to meaningfully enhance the educative experience of the exhibition, which is perfectly sound. The exhibition does still less for the art, leaving it generally looking useless and laboured. In some cases, however, as with Hatoum's steel bed, standing in here as a hilariously crude physical representation of sleeping problems, those are simply inherent characteristics of the work. Elsewhere, one of Tunick's infamous photographs of naked people sits prettily but vacantly in a section about health and the environment. Similarly, Calle's images of monochromatic meals look nice but don't do much to illustrate the connection between food and wellbeing.

Fortunately, the centrepiece of the show, Lydian Bells, a specially commissioned sound installation by Eno, is an exception, being aesthetically interesting as well as conceptually in tune with its surroundings. In a corridor painted bright fuchsia and lit by pink neon lights, Eno has placed 12 CD players, each one playing a different element of an ambient composition that draws upon a pre-modern music theory about the emotional effects of different types of music. True to form, the music soothes the soul and calms the mind, providing welcome relief from the hordes of screaming children that infest the rest of the museum, and proves that not all attempts to merge art and science are doomed to failure. ■

- *Until 7 September. Information: 0870 870 4868.*