

Tracey by Tracey...



Storyteller: Tracey Emin at her new show - Memphis

By [Nick Hackworth](#) [Evening Standard](#) | 05 April 2012



Tracey Emin: Memphis at the Counter Gallery, EC2

Originality is a false god, rightly abjured. So perhaps it doesn't matter that this latest solo show is practically identical to her first, which was staged just under a decade ago in the tiny space White Cube used to occupy off Piccadilly.

Trending

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Emin is essentially a storyteller and here, as back then, she displays framed items of personal memorabilia alongside drawings, prints and passages of writing that collude to tell various stories.

Tracey being Tracey, the stories are about one thing, Tracey. Not all of Tracey either, just a little bit of her: her sensitive and emotionally raw youth, because tales of the rigours of a celebrity lifestyle would be rather less moving. So for example we have Whimsy, consisting of a display case of kitsch figurines accompanied by a text that recounts how Emin collected the china objects as tokens of love for her mum, only to be told off by her for buying so much crap.

Typically, the visual signs of her original and continuing authenticity are laid on a bit thick. Here "wimzie, wimsey, wimzzy, wimsey" follow one another across the top off the page, all crossed out, before the appearance of "whimsy" as the heading. Similarly, the exhibition's title, Memphis, is a misspelling of Memphis.

2 due to IT loophole

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Other pieces recall her feelings about her nan dying, her friendship with three Mancunian squatters she met when she was 11 and her thoughts on a sad, lonely man who disappeared, leaving his stuff behind.

Crucially, the stories are told rather well, endowing the displayed objects with a superficial poignancy. However, the demands of producing more trademark Emin work has consigned her to the continuing and increasingly absurd commercial exploitation of her supposedly troubled youth. For despite the skill of their telling, some stories do not bare repeating.

- *Until 10 January 2004. Information: 020 7684 8888.*
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