

HAROON MIRZA - A FOUNDATION, LIVERPOOL.UK

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Arbitrary sculptural elements melted into acoustic pulsations in a vat marked 'Cultural History' forms the basis of the new bag of tricks pulled from Haroon Mirza's sleeve at Liverpool's A Foundation.



Haroon Mirza Installation view

From almost every component of each installation at his first solo exhibition, artist Haroon Mirza coaxes a sound which subverts the original purpose of the equipment; transistor radios play beats of static interference, turntables are stuck in locked grooves of metallic scratching, but more startlingly, Mirza manipulates the Cat Stevens song 'Father and Son' into something *enjoyable*. With merciful sampling of the song's opening riff Mirza abandons those cloyingly sentimental lyrics ('find a girl, settle down / if you want you can marry, / look at me, I am old but I'm happy' – yeah, it's *that* song) in *Adhān* (2009), a piece which takes its name from the Arabic name for the Islamic call to prayer; a sly reference to Stevens' conversion.

The tall ceilings of A Foundation's Blade Factory allow the musical vibrations to swim, to bob around their vaulted enclosure, rolling all over the symbols of the New York dance scene that the King of Pop once ruled, and spread themselves thinly over the somewhat arbitrary objects in a false semantic cloak. Like Nam June Paik's marriage of the visual and acoustic, the potentiality of dormant energy lying hidden in everyday objects is revealed by Mirza's fast hand.

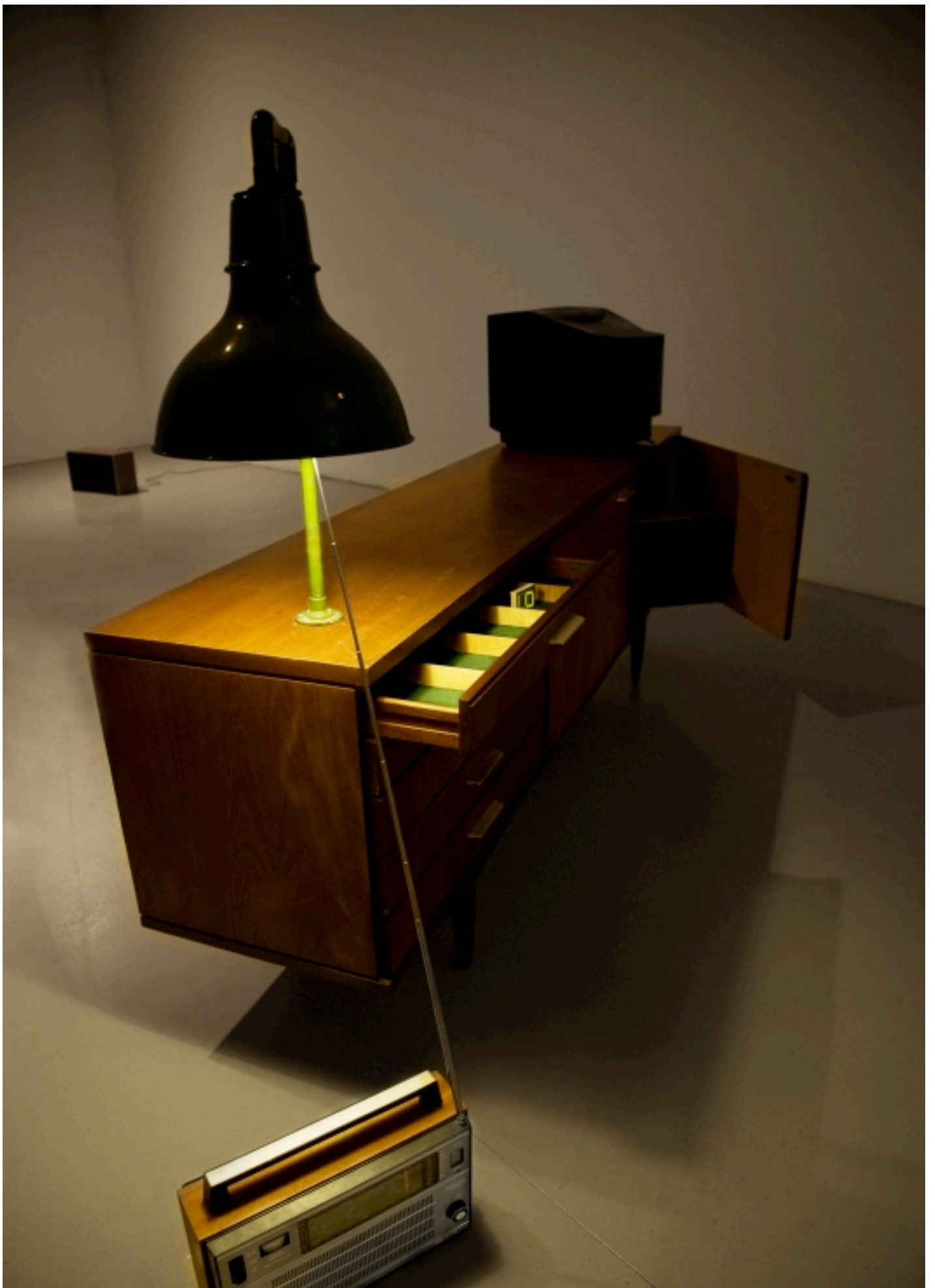
The snippet of the 1970s MoR balladeer binds to unlikely visual and acoustic correspondences of other devices in the work. Spasmodic light bursts from a desk lamp are manipulated into a syncopated beat which pops and buzzes from a dusty radio set; we hear a cello through an antique speaker cabinet, with video of the gliding bow projected against its veneer. Synchronizing these stimuli with the Cat Stevens nugget, Mirza builds an aural and visual harmony from seemingly discordant sources. And layered against a wash of white noise this creates a genuinely serene mood.



Haroon Mirza Installation view

Whilst the instruments of *Adhān* build into structured audiovisual performance, *Paradise Loft* (2009) is immediately bewildering; a transistor radio spins wildly upon a turntable, a skewed video projection occupies one wall whilst garbled words and a punching mechanical rhythm fill the space. Yet the larger scale of this installation also allows viewers to tune into and synthesize the role performed by each found component, immersed in the more complex visual and acoustic rhythms of the piece.

Try crouching next to the speaker with the shabbiest, most antique vibe, listening to each tasty warm buzz of static to really get you going.





Haroon Mirza [2009]



Paradise Loft Haroon Mirza [2009]