

## Cocaine Orgasm

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### BANK

Among London's alternative art spaces, Bank – a gallery run by four artist/curators – has a slap-dash appeal that singles it out from the crowd. In keeping with their relentlessly curious titles, each group show comes with a distinctive theme-park ambience. Their Christmas Show, 'Cocaine Orgasm', is no exception. The gallery walls have been transformed into a giant ice grotto with paintings dotted on the walls and video monitors scattered on the floor amid fake snow. If it sounds tacky, it is. But it's also a seditious attack on the antiseptic white spaces where art is normally viewed.

Fame, sex and drugs surface as key themes. Max Wigram surreptitiously filmed the private view guests who now appear on video. For at least 15 minutes, liggers are elevated to stardom. Less funny is Janette Parris' cartoon of London's art dealers going shopping at Kwik Save. Unwittingly, incestuousness ren-

ders it trite. Jessica Voorsanger has sent a mail-shot eulogy out to Hugh Grant. Under the guise of a naive fan, she ridicules the sexist/racist overtones of media coverage of his recent blow-job scandal. Rebecca Warren's short film shows the artist having her face drizzled with spunk; titillation quickly flips into distress. Chris Ofili's self-portrait paraphrases Blaxploitation movies (Afro, trippy graphics) and ridicules stereotypes. Tim Allen, a tasteful and earnest abstract painter, has ditched his normal style for day-glo fluorescents smeared directly on to the walls. They are wonderful. Lolly Batty's polystyrene cocktail bar throws modernist design, functionalism and mass-market furniture into uneasy co-existence.

If, like me, the Queen's speech makes you fantasise about bringing back the guillotine, Bank's puppet version of the Royal Family is the ultimate wish fulfilment. The dolls are lined up against the wall as if awaiting execution. A winter wonderland for the disaffected.

*Tania Guha*