

Alice Theobald: Weddings & Babies

Art Pilar Corrias (/london/art/galleries/pilar-corrias), Fitzrovia Until Friday March 31 2017 FREE

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Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias

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If you get a thrill from staring fear in the eye, then forget horror movies, rollercoasters and your bank balance, Alice Theobald's show is about something far more terrifying: marriage and babies.

The entrance to the main space in the gallery is blocked by an imposing wall of sandbags covered in chintzy pillowcases, a military fortification rendered docile and domestic. Astroturf leads you through the barricades to a bunch of spot-lit glass screens scrawled with conversations. One is about someone's dad slipping and needing to be put in a home, another finds a bloke confiding in his mate that the mother of his baby won't let him touch her nipples anymore, that he's become second best. These are private, intimate moments – waypoints in everyone's path through adulthood. A baby monitor on the wall picks up the sound of passers-by outside, adding their dreary fleeting chitchat to the melee.

A Stannah Stairlift whips you downstairs, a stuttering helter skelter to adult hell, where you're immersed in a 3D film of two guys pushing a baby through a park, talking about their fear of taking the 'next step'.

Many of the characters here are men. Is Theobald criticising the plague of millennial Peter Pan man-babies, or using their voices to tell a common story? I'm not sure, but Peter Pan man-babies are going to find this painfully uncomfortable.

You might have countless friends who are settling down and feeling happy about it, or you might even be one of them. But there are countless people out there who are currently frozen by fear of commitment, babies, weddings, and mortgages, but weighed down by the expectation that those are things that grown-ups are meant to do. It's the shoulder-crushing albatross of enforced aspiration. Theobald's silly, humorous art confronts the truest fear of them all: the fear of growing up, and it's horrifying.

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BY: EDDY FRANKEL
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Pilar Corrias (<https://www.timeout.com/london/art/galleries/pilar-corrias>)

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