

TIME OUT LONDON

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'ARTISTS I STEAL FROM' REVIEW

by Eddy Frankel

Summer group shows in London galleries are the worst. They're just naff excuses to sell leftover art in the quiet months, helmed by some curator who's insisted on writing something on the wall about how the show focuses on physical spatiality or the violence of poetics or some shit. Urgh.

But this one, somehow, isn't awful. Young Venezuelan-American artist Alvaro Barrington has been given free rein to fill this ludicrously ostentatious spa-like space with art the he likes, is influenced by and nicks from. I mean, most people have no idea who Barrington is so it's a bit of a useless premise, because why should we care who he's nicked ideas from? But walking through the show, you realise that, damn, Barrington's got taste.

The titles are scrawled in pencil on the walls and the themes are splodged in ink as you enter each room. There are Post-Its and postcards tacked next to paintings, while some things are hung too close together, some too far apart. It's great: informal, approachable and fun.

And the art isn't half bad. There's an incredibly dark Jean-Michel Basquiat self-portrait, a pendulous Louise Bourgeois sculpture, a Robert Rauschenberg chunk of car, a cracking Philip Guston and a hilariously dumb Georg Baselitz painting of Hitler, for some reason.

And that's just the big names. There's the graffiti-influenced scribblings of Gerasimos Floratos too, and a lovely Denzil Forrester work, all hung near a framed panel from the 'Spawn' comic book.

You could definitely do with a bit more of Barrington's own work here for the sake of context, but if you ignore all that, this just becomes a really accessible, fun, interesting group show. It's tongue-in-cheek, full of good art and nonsense-free. What more could you want?