



Image not courtesy the artist

## MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL :: Martin Creed

By Timmah Ball  
VIC | 09.11.2005

**Martin Creed** plunges **ACCA** - and high art? - into darkness.

As part of the 2005 **Melbourne International Arts Festival**, audiences had the unique experience of seeing a new installation by acclaimed British Artist **Martin Creed**. The Turner Prize winner, whose art has regularly met opposition with critiques and bemusement by audiences alike, certainly continued to test the boundaries of legitimate practice. His current work specifically developed for the Festival, aptly titled **Lights Off**, consisted, quite simply, of the gallery space in darkness, with the lights turned off.

Undoubtedly the concept may feel like a conceited gesture by the artist to purposely subvert the notion of high art. It could similarly be seen as a display of their authority and power by suggesting that they can create art by simply turning the lights off. At a public lecture prior to the opening Creed himself appeared as stripped back, nonchalant and evasive as a pitch black room, while eager audience members asked questions. In each case he widely ignored what was being asked of him, instead providing ridiculous blank statements. Yet undoubtedly both his character and art have not only likable but engrossing features.

Although walking into a darkened empty space may not satisfy everybody's concept of the gallery experience, there was something addictive, intense and memorable about the installation. Perhaps after entering the first room the viewer is compelled by the emptiness and the sense of grandeur that envelops you. As you continue through to other rooms the darkness is stronger till you are almost in pitch blackness once in the last room. There is no sound and nothing in the space so you are left simply with your own body in a darkened room. The scenario has the capacity to allude to numerous sensations such as childish fears of darkness, being lost or simply loneliness. In this way the installation is successful - or at least potentially enjoyable for a certain type of viewer for its ability to have you truly lost in thought.

:: *The MIAF Visual Arts Program at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) is on show until December 4th, 2005.*

---

### ORGANISATION:

Melbourne International Arts Festival

---



**THE PROGRAM** is an initiative of the Australia Council's Community Partnerships & Market Development Division  
Home | About | Contact | E-newsletter | Legals