

Different Stares Present Future's Past



Christian Mendoza / 2017-08-07



Berlin is a city that celebrates open borders, but there is one place where the door often remains emphatically shut:

Berghain. The electronic music mecca is famous not only for heavy industrial techno and sexual fantasies lived out in the "darkrooms" inside the cavernous interiors of this former power plant, but also for its strict and most inscrutable door policy. Hopeful revellers can queue for up to four hours and still be turned away from what is arguably the most hallowed dancefloor on the planet.

Who decides who gets in or who doesn't? It is of course Berghain's notorious bouncer Sven Marquardt and his team

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who have an enigmatic entry policy that clubbers have been trying to crack for years.

But behind the feared and grim-faced gatekeeper is a very talented photographer. He returns to the Philippines with his first solo exhibit titled *"Future's Past"*, a retrospective collection of his photographs over the past 30years. The exhibit runs until *August 11 at Yuchengco Museum.*

Here's a verbal tour of Sven's exhibit.

Ever feel like you're being watched? The peculiar feeling of being glanced upon is remarkably the first thing you noticed when you enter the exhibit's main hall. It is also this sensation that makes you more interested in Sven's photographs. His black and white analogue photography displays Berlin locals that literally look at you in different ways, in different angles. Each portrait tells an intimate story.


Walking away from the main hall, one gets to a narrower hallway where a man with hood greets you with a blank stare. Adjacent to it is an image of a woman, probably in her 50s or 60s, with an eerie smile, standing behind a moustached child with his mouth forming a perfect 'O'.

More powerfully themed photos welcome you as you go to a wider gallery. On the left wall are five photos neatly arranged side by side while the right wall shows six photos arranged in 3-column, 2-row layout.

Sven's work suggests a complex connection between the future and the past through his dark photographs, that immediately captures your attention. There is tension felt through the piercing stares of his subjects. You can fully include yourself in the depiction as you go over the fine details of the photographs and you can imagine a story out of the contextual visuals presented in the prints.

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