

# Soheila Sokhanvari: Boogie Wonderland

CULTURE ART

1ST  
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What, when,  
why



Collective memory plays a big part in the shaping of culture – a fact that Iranian-born artist Soheila Sokhanvari has chosen to reflect on through new works in her solo show *Boogie Wonderland*. The Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London provides the space for a colourful exploration of politics, history and pop culture.

The works on show are quite a mix – colourful pictures share the space with black-and-white photograph-like images and even a sculpture. When talking of collective memory, Sokhanvari is mostly concerned by that of her native country, her key area of focus being the pre-revolution Iran of 1979, which to her is a time that “led a nation to stand up collectively, when my own memory, as a child, is diminished.” Understandably, revolution is one of the main motifs of the exhibition, but as Sokhanvari was at a boarding school in the UK when the revolution was unfolding, all she saw of it was through a screen, on the news. This can be traced in her works: as colours and shapes dance with one another, so do political undertones and pop cultural motifs.

Oil drawings created with Iranian crude oil are mixed with multi-coloured self-portraits, including a bust, *Touching the Void* – a sculpture rich in colour, with dominating red shades recalling the blood of the revolution running through the veins of the artist. Her self-portraits are predominantly hot-blooded and bold, the variety of shapes creating almost a sense of shapelessness, representing Sokhanvari’s thoughts more so than her physical appearance.

Political undertones and the concept of collective trauma aside, *Boogie Wonderland* carries a very strong feeling of nostalgia – and it is probably this that will hit home strongest

Soheila Sokhanvari: Boogie  
Wonderland at Kristin  
Hjellegjerde Gallery

★★★★★

Dates

16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 - 14<sup>th</sup> November  
2015

Entry

Free

Links & directions

WWW



with most viewers, even among those unfamiliar with Iran's historic background. From the sepia photographs telling the stories of young, careless men spending equally careless time at the beach, to women amid 70s-style backdrops, the works on show scream nostalgia. Of course, though that deep, sentimental longing recalls a better, more colourful time, nostalgia is often misleading and it is up to the viewer to decide if those paintings carry sadness or joy.

**Verdict:** ★★★★★

***Lyubomira Kirilova***

Soheila Sokhanvari: *Boogie Wonderland is at the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery from 16<sup>th</sup> October until 14<sup>th</sup> November 2015, for further information visit [here](#).*