

Preview

Shezad Dawood: Montana



The Making of 'Feature'

Galerie Gabriel Rolt,
11 April to 16 May

Ever heard of something called 'altermodernism'? According to influential French curator Nicolas Bourriaud, who coined the term for the Tate Triennial 2009, a new generation of artists are replacing the postmodernists, driven by the need to translate between cultures in a globalised world.

Half-Indian, half-Pakistani, London-based artist Shezad Dawood, who is presenting a solo show, called 'Montana', in Amsterdam this month, seems to fit the bill. His latest endeavour, 'Feature', a 55-minute film, was screened at the Tate Triennial kick-off in February and the artist has his own room at the exhibit. Galerie Gabriel Rolt in the Jordaan gives us a taste of it.

'Montana' showcases works created in the making of 'Feature', a mock zombie Western based on the oft-told tale of the Battle of Little Big Horn intercut with scenes from the mythologised history of the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne's battle with

US Army's Seventy Cavalry.

As Dawood articulates it in an interview for Saatchi online, the 'radically idealistic universalising basis' to his work allows him to 'rewrite and reconcile superficially different cultural elements and ideologies'. Pretty altermodernist stuff.

The 'Montana' exhibition includes storyboard paintings, props that were used during the shooting and stills from the film. One of the sculptures is a pair of horns made of neon-lights reminiscent of Native American cultural symbols, but made to look like mass-consumption items of pop art. The paintings, on the other hand, are quickly drawn forms with energetic brushwork.

Besides being basically a documentation of a filmmaking process, the show makes one thing clear: for all the hybridisation that might inform the making of these new 'artefacts', Dawood's props and paintings remain very much bound to the modernist tradition. Altermodernism may just be a new label on an old bag of tricks.

Catherine Somzé

