JEFF KOONS

IL FIGLIO DEL POP
COSI CAMBIA LA MIA ARTE
AL TEMPO DEL TERRORE

THE POP'S GOLDENBOY
HOW MY ART HAS CHANGED
IN THE AGE OF TERROR

INTERVISTA/INTERVIEW MABEDO, KOSOLAPOV, RIELLO, SIKANDER SGUARDI
/VIEWS BONAMI, GIONI, KELLER, J. H. MARTIN, OBRIST, TODOLI DOSSIER
VIENNA DESIGN DENIS SANTACHIARA GALLERISTI/ART DEALERS GIORGIO
MARCONI REPORTAGE GHANA IL COLLEZIONISTA/ THE COLLECTOR ALDO BUSI
Nata in una città cosmopolita dell’India, al confine con il Pakistan, vive negli Stati Uniti e professa un Islam moderato, tollerante e aperto al dialogo. I suoi lavori spaziano dalla miniatura tradizionale della sua terra d’origine all’animazione digitale.

Shahzia Sikander, la pittrice indiana-pakistanese che lavora con tecniche tradizionali (miniatura) e contemporanee (video e fotografia), è un esempio di come l’arte possa superare le barriere culturali e religiose. Nella sua opera, la tradizione indiana, in particolare la miniatura, si fonde con elementi moderni per creare un’arte unica e innovativa.

Born in a cosmopolitan Indian city on the Pakistani border, now she lives in the United States. She believes in a moderate brand of Islam which is tolerant and open to dialogue. Her works range from the traditional miniatures of her homeland to digital animation.

The visitor is greeted by a large double painting done directly onto two facing walls. Entitled Double, it portrays five male heads wrapped in monumental turbans, piled one on top of the other so that they form a pyramid which, in the second image, has imperceptibly been transformed into a mountainous formation of knobby and tormented rocks. In the middle is a video of an Indian dancer whose long hair plays with the lines of the painting whilst her body, traversed by slow and supple movements, rests on a large red painted with mud on the floor. This is the latest installation by Shahzia Sikander, the undisputed star of a large group of young Indo-Pakistan artists (the large majority being women), who in recent years have reached the very summit of the art world in the United States. From that moment on, in the second half of the 90s, her ascent has been unstoppable: in ’97 she took part in the prestigious Whitney Biennial, and two years later she was included in the American Century exhibition, held again at the Whitney; these were to be followed by a number of one-woman shows held at the Hirshhorn Museum of Washington and the San...
Deigo Museum, Namie, open until 2 January at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum of Ridgefield, Connecticut, is the latest in a long series of works, and perhaps the one which best summarizes the recent atypical art activation in traditional miniatures, a flourishing Indo-Pakistani heritages, to the more recent installations and videos. The miniatures which are in many senses, and which require a great deal of work bordering on the obsessive and yet which remains limited in terms of its impact and legibility, I have always been fascinated by the visual source of the Indo-Pakistani cultures, the very same which politics and religion would separate us and stand against itself. This experience, concluded with admirable stringency and discipline with results that are deeply fascinating even to our superficial Western eyes, lead to the creation of the first Indian divers with many arms and a large Islamic veil covering face and hair. They are synchronistic and problematic figures that come about from two stereotypes, neither of which, the artist wants to suggest, are necessarily better than one another. Their roles and functions go beyond appearances. Brought up in a very religious and practicing family, Shakeri indeed presents a version of Islam which is quite different from the one which the media have familiarized us Westerners with. "When we were little getting up to eat in the middle of the night was wonderful," I still feel free, with the same tightness of personal strength which is still related to that positive childhood experience. I cannot link religiousness with any feeling of oppression. I have never worn a veil, in my family everyone thought that women should work and do something with their lives. That is definitely not the widely-conceived concept, especially there where anything that is connected with Islam inevitably means terrorism or oppression of women. I actually studied Christianity and Judaism. I went to school and was brought up to be a child that respected God and acquired knowledge. When I first arrived people didn’t even know what the different languages were like. Yet it is also a fact that we can be respected and simplified. Perhaps as a reaction to this excessive simplification, the work of Shakeri Stanek is never obvious.

In this last one-woman show, for example, she is presenting 91 ink and paper works. It is very important for me that the serious powers that the Pakistani miniaturists used under the canvas of the painting. They are small and extremely refined drawings which叙述 those times. "An impression of the image and the constant evolving of one form into another. This topic deals with even in a more explicit terms in the digital animation of Pursuit Curve, a title taken straight from a mathematical definition used to describe the trajectory of an object following another. Accompanied by the text, the artist found that the, abstract images are slowly transformed into one another in a constant mutation which the artist associates with the human story and its systemic "mathematical" impact on the landscape which is inhibited, and which seems fixed and perennial in spite of its real unstable and fluctuating nature. Shakeri Stanek's painting has always been a kind of narration: for her 1992 degree thesis at the National College of Arts of Lahore, she created a miniature on vellum (the traditional, handmade support) which Two years in the long-narrated life story up to that point. A kind of autobiographical novel in one simple scene, which is mirrored in many smaller scenes. It is a very intense self-portrait. My mother in particular made me aware of what it means to "talk at", the artist explains. I feared the entire country with my parents. We wanted to look at this country of ours which had to offer a journey of three days on end in the car, we even slept it in so that we could expose ourselves to the different times, cultures and traditions."

The artist not only does not assimilate these traditions of her country with Indian ones, but also with many typically Western contemporary elements, as well as fragments of her own personal story. For this reason, her installations from 2000 onwards often feature layers of vellum and paper overlapping each other, secret spaces hidden within the object. The artist has also worked with the spectator can only attempt to grasp from afar. The layers secretly preserve the integrity of what is fragmented Shakeri. Another landscape then, but this time of the soul.