

PRESS RELEASE

Royale With Cheese

Ashish Avikunthak, Sarnath Banerjee, Debnath Basu, Simon Bedwell, David Blandy, Sadequain, Shezad Dawood & Simon Linke

6th March - 3rd April,

Private View 5th March 6.30pm - 9.00pm

Jules: *Mmm-mmmm. That is a tasty burger. Vincent, ever have a Big Kahuna Burger?*
[Vincent shakes his head]

Jules: *Wanna bite? They're real tasty.*

Vincent: *Ain't hungry.*

Jules: *Well, if you like burgers give 'em a try sometime. I can't usually get 'em myself because my girlfriend's a vegetarian which pretty much makes me a vegetarian. But I do love the taste of a good burger. Mm-mm-mm. You know what they call a Quarter Pounder with cheese in France?*

Brett: *No.*

Jules: *Tell'em, Vincent.*

Vincent: *A Royale with cheese.*

Jules: *A Royale with cheese! You know why they call it that?*

Brett: *Because of the metric system?*

Jules: *Check out the big brain on Brett! You're a smart motherfucker. That's right. The metric system.*

(From 'Pulp Fiction', 1994)

'Royale With Cheese' is a group exhibition that explores the translation, corruption and bastardisation of signs, symbols and words. Often these changes occur as signs cross cultures, in journeys which undo the homogenising drives of globalization by insisting on local inflections and misunderstandings. This show contains works that hinge on deliberate or accidental mistranslations - a process that inadvertently creates new objects of knowledge. These are works that resist notions of the melting-pot and foreground the unassimilated, the localized and the incommensurable.

Ashish Avikunthak's film 'Dancing Othello' follows the hybrid performance of the actor Arjun Raina who has developed 'KheIKali', an experimental mix of Kathakali and Shakespeare. The narrative moves between Kathakali and Shakespeare before ending in the actor mocking the filmmaker's pretensions.

Sarnath Banerjee's 'Age of Cosmetic Politics' re-imagines Che Guevara's journeying to the Congo to help Laurent Kabilla help fight the CIA stooge Mobutu. Banerjee uses the visual language of the graphic novel to develop a narrative of cultural misunderstanding where the optimism of cross-cultural dialogue quickly turns into mutual misunderstanding.

Debnath Basu draws upon letters, his father's handwriting, Bengali riddles and offbeat texts to construct works where individual letters, words and texts are set free from their original context and gain new meanings through being set free from their original signification.

Simon Bedwell is showing a suite of works, all of which have a marked disjuncture between the found image and subsequent text overlaid by Bedwell. The text is often produced in deliberately obsolete computer programmes such as ClipArt and WordArt to heighten the incongruence between message and medium.

David Blandy makes films, comics, fanzines and also works in performance. Over the last few years he has produced a large body of work around the invented figure of the Barefoot Lone Pilgrim, dressed in the orange robes of a Shaolin Monk. This body of work is presented in the basement floor of 'Royale With Cheese'.

Sadequain, the Pakistani modernist artist who passed away in 1987 combined motifs from traditional calligraphy with developments in modern art to produce a number of works where the border between the calligraphic and the representational are made highly ambiguous. These works produce calligraphic marks as double signifiers - both through their literal meaning and through their figurative connotations.

Shezad Dawood has used text in a number of his works. He has produced neon sculptures about the ninety-nine names attributed to Allah and film poster paintings that recreate cult mainstream Hollywood film posters re-staged in Pakistan. His works meditate on the ways in which western and non-western cultures produce and signify themselves for each other.

Simon Linke has made a number of heavily-worked paintings of Artforum advertisements, utilising paint to suggest the excessiveness and narcissism associated with the commercial art world. Linke has noted that the advertisements are also highly aspirational documents aimed at artists: "the promise of salvation and adoration through recognition."

For further queries about the exhibition please contact Niru Ratnam: niru@aicongallery.com

Aicon Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm

8 Heddon Street

London W1B 4BU

Tel: 020 7734 7575

www.aicongallery.com