



FOUR WHEELS BAD

JEREMY DELLER AND THE CULTURE OF CAR BOMBS

CAR BOMBS, WHETHER because of their anonymity or their exponentially increasing frequency over the past 20 years, have become another material for artists. The most famous example is Walid Raad's photographic series of blown-out engines from 1980s Beirut – the period that marked the real beginning of this low-budget weapon. Jeremy Deller first thought of using a blown-out car – a car that had been destroyed in a car-bomb explosion rather than a weapon itself – in his proposal for Trafalgar Square's vacant fourth plinth, which he said played with the idea of the "presentation of the spoils of war to a curious public dating back at least to the Roman Empire." The idea will finally become a reality in February at New York's New Museum. Deller has brought back from Iraq the remains of a car that was blown up in Baghdad's al-Mutanabbi book market (the attack killed 30), an event the artist calls "an attack on culture." The car will be placed in the museum's window, while the actual "exhibition" will consist of Iraqi experts in archaeology, economics and history, and Iraqi nationals who have fled the country since 2003, as well as members of the US Army, on hand to provoke "discussions" about their experiences in Iraq. Deller says, "It's about having an intelligent discussion around the war, which isn't always possible through the media, especially in the US. And it's also out of my interests; it's the kind of thing I would be interested in seeing if I was at an art gallery." So far, so Tino Sehgal, but after the New Museum show, Deller will haul the car across America to Los Angeles with a handful of the Iraqi "experts" to generate discussions with Americans along the way, "while trying not to get run out of town." Xerxes Cook

The 3M Project: Mathias Poledna, Daria Martin, Jeremy Deller and Urban China is at the New Museum, New York from January 28-March 22.

www.newmuseum.org

The al-Mutanabbi book market, March 5, 2007. Photography by Khalid Mohammed/AP/PA Photos



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