

Desi Pop is at the Maison Folie Wazemmes from 14 October 2006 to 14 January 2007, and is part of Lille 3000.

Works by Hamra Abbas, Faiza Butt, Shezad Dawood, Naeem Rana and Rashid Rana

London, October, 2006: Desi Pop presents a selection of artists who inhabit a territory on the cusp of east and west, referencing the detritus of consumer culture in their practice. Defying borders and subverting stereotypes, they make art that is consciously influenced by an international visual language of commercial and cultural exchange. Taking their inspiration from sources as diverse as Hindu mythology, kitsch souvenirs and the Wizard of Oz, this group create a hybrid space where their own hyphenated identities can coexist.

**Hamra Abbas** references a familiar mythological scene from the genre of traditional South Asian miniatures, of Lord Krishna and the *gopis*, his female companions. She plays with symbols of sacredness and femininity, crowning the *gopis*' voluptuous bodies with neon halos. Created from the varying hues of natural clay, they are multiple variations on an archetypal form, reflecting the plurality within us.

**Faiza Butt** has adopted an anti-painting form of painting, using a pointillist felt tip technique with enamel spray paints, on innovative materials such as architect's film. She explores the aspirations of contemporary urban dwellers, using references from the Wizard of Oz and popular tabloid journalism. She is fascinated by the costumes people choose to represent themselves, and by the way mass media manipulates our desires.

**Shezad Dawood's** work engages with symbols particular to the UK – In *Hybrids*, bulldogs signify Britishness, but are absurdly festooned with ceremonial turbans. The word *tandoori* (grilled) in *Epiphany* is symbolic of the South Asian presence in Britain; curry and beer brings punters to the hip east end of London, once the home of working class immigrants.

*Ommatidia* by **Rashid Rana**, is inspired by the ubiquitous posters of Bollywood movie stars that adorn footpaths, barber shops and bedrooms across South Asian neighborhoods worldwide. These superheroes have been composed by marshalling hundreds of different images, all pixel-sized portraits of ordinary men from the streets of Lahore.

**Naeem Rana** creates digitally manipulated prints exploring the infatuation of consumer culture with branded products. Works such as *New Freedom Formula*, from his *Heavenly Products* series, question the ease with which cultural boundaries are traversed when the commercial interests of global business are the primary force driving the exchange.