



Alex Bag's video "The Van (Redux)*" functions as a mockumentary about a sleazy art entrepreneur. Credit Team Gallery

Alex Bag, 'The Van (Redux)*'

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Much has changed since Alex Bag made her video "Untitled (The Van)" for the 2001 Armory Show, where it was exhibited inside a customized Dodge cargo van at the American Fine Arts booth. Back then art fairs were not as ubiquitous as they are today or compulsory for galleries to stay afloat; one of the Armory Show's founders, Colin de Land, a gallerist and owner of American Fine Arts, was still alive (he died of cancer in 2003 at the age of 47); and the Internet wasn't the cultural force it is now.

This is addressed, obliquely or otherwise, in "The Van (Redux)*" (2015), which had its debut at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami in December. This nearly 30-minute video, now at Team, functions as a mockumentary about a sleazy art entrepreneur named Leroy LeLoup, who has figured out a new method for discovering artists: He looks for kindergarten-age prodigies and nurtures their talent into the "crème de la crème of post-Internet art." Ms. Bag's brother is Leroy, revisiting the same character he portrayed in the original video, and her bewigged 5-year-old son plays three different young artists whose preferred materials are light sabers, Legos, princess figures and "poop." (Ms. Bag played three up-and-coming artists in the original video.)

Camped out at the Miami museum, Leroy steals food, liquor and silverware from the institution and locks a child in a room to paint. ("Why is it so big?" the boy asks about a looming blank canvas. "Bigger is better," Leroy responds. "Plus, it's the perfect size for Instagram.") The video's final shot features Leroy digitally inserted into a recent photograph of the art collector Stefan Simchowitz and his entourage. Ms. Bag's satirical depiction of the art world isn't pitch perfect: The video's sound, per her signature '90s D.I.Y. aesthetic, is rather bad. But the work resonates powerfully with viewers who remember the art world in which Ms. Bag emerged — or who aspire to join the current one.

Team

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