

Art

Trisha Donnelly Modern Art Oxford

The first major public presentation of the San Francisco-based artist Trisha Donnelly is now on show at Modern Art Oxford. She's the artist who famously rode into her first New York show in 2002 on a white horse and wearing a Napoleonic uniform.

You won't find a white horse in this exhibition — it's the white walls of the gallery that will be making the impact this time and propelling us into her unsettling worlds.

Trisha Donnelly is one of a new generation of artists to have emerged in recent years and, yes, she has something to say, but you may not discover what by taking in each work separately. They need to be taken in as a whole as she is an artist who questions the necessity and viability of making art — perhaps of making anything.

Suzanne Cotter, the curator of the exhibition, says that Donnelly has an extraordinary capacity to disrupt our normal way of seeing and thinking about the world, be it through the uncanny solidity she gives to her drawings and sphinx-like forms, or the boisterous energy of her proposals and interventions. She goes on to say she is an artist who captivates us in her suggestion that everything doesn't always have to be the way we think it is.

For this exhibition, which is on show in the three interconnecting upper galleries, she has created an architectural equivalent of the building's sounds. The spaces have become an enclosed audio form, within which she produces traces of the galleries' multiple



frequencies. To explain this extraordinary work would be to use words to describe images which best explain themselves when seen in context. The pencil drawings, the photographs, the padded fabric pieces on which a small detail has been painted (*see picture*), the roses and the mahogany logs are all part of a whole which is best not dissected and held up for examination piece by piece.

Trisha Donnelly will be talking about her work with Suzanne Cotter at 6.30pm on Thursday, November 15, and free exhibition tours will take place on Saturday afternoons at 3pm.

Helen Peacocke