

Under the Radar Festival: Dead Set #3

The Kitchen. Conceived and directed by Caden Manson. With ensemble cast



Dead Set #3 emerges from the glorious wreckage where clubland's techno fetish collides head-on with topical political rage. Devised by multimedia auteur Caden Manson and executed by six fearless actors, this visually and sonically ravishing production will leave you rattled, amazed and perhaps a little queasy—cannibalism is a prevailing theme.

The costumes alone—by Aimee Gardner and Frances Sorenson—deserve praise: a variety of creepy ensembles such as black jumpsuits and glittery head-covering bags with blond wigs; rubber one-piece bathing suits accessorized with gimp masks and high heels; and T-shirts that ominously read eat me. The set consists of a forest of mike stands, video cameras and lighting equipment, all of which are manipulated by the performers, while their movements are captured and live-edited on four large screens. Rather than scenes or story, the actors present a series of dances, tableaux and fragments.

By flashing grisly news photographs from Iraq and bleacher-shaking barrages of explosions, gunfire and helicopter blades, Manson is clearly creating a war play. His androgynous, camera-wielding goons subjugate each other in a manner reminiscent of Abu Ghraib. And the strange, beautiful final sequence involves a wounded vet who hooks up with a stranger via the Internet for the express purpose of being killed and eaten by him (based on a real case in Germany). In this hellish, desensitized world in which video reproduction is reality, being physically consumed becomes the ultimate connection. — *David*



TAKE YOUR PIXEL David Commander is ready for his close-up.
Photograph: Caden Manson