

San Antonio artist shines at N.Y. show

Robleto hailed as a 'New Bohemian' at Whitney Biennial 2004.

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NEW YORK — Compared to the retro look of '60s and '70s art that figures prominently in the Whitney Biennial 2004, Dario Robleto's antique radio and 19th-century Ouija board appear quaintly old-fashioned.

"I still feel really great about being in the biennial," Robleto said. "I'm especially interested in the '60s political angle, which is why I think my work was picked."

San Antonio artist Robleto, 31, hailed as a "New Bohemian" by New York magazine, is a stand-out among the 108 artists and collaborative groups in this inner-generational show, which features older established artists as well as younger, emerging talent.

Every two years, the Whitney Biennial attempts to survey what's going on in contemporary American art. Artists from around the country, England and Canada converged on the Whitney for a media preview Wednesday. The biennial opens to the public today and will run through May 30.

"I don't mind being called a bohemian — at least the word has some meaning — but I'm a little suspicious of what they're calling gothic," Robleto said.

Robleto arrived March 2 and worked through Sunday installing his work. He's scheduled to be part of a panel discussion this Sunday.

"I think Dario is one of the great stars of the future," said Michael Duncan of Art in Amer-



ROBLETO

ica. "His work has the feeling, compassion and real substance that 80 percent of the work in the show doesn't. Most of the work is rather vacuous,

but Dario digs deeper:

"Content is out of fashion with many artists, but Dario is bringing it back with a vengeance."

Robleto's work may look antiquated but it is packed with layer upon layer of meaning. However, his use of dinosaur and human bones combined with ground-up vinyl records that belonged to his parents often reveals how '60s idealism has become fossilized.

"He is looking back with self-awareness at the '60s and '70s,"

"He sees both the successes and failures of the last revolutionary period in this country's history."

SHAMIM MOMIN
Whitney curator

said Whitney curator Shamim Momin. "He sees both the successes and failures of the last revolutionary period in this country's history."

Robleto is one of three Texas artists in the biennial. Robyn O'Neil of Houston created her large-scale drawing in San Antonio at ArtPace. Her white guys in jogging suits in a mountainous landscape fits in with the biennial's emphasis on large-

scale drawing.

Erick Swenson of Dallas has a sculptural installation of a small white deer that appears to be cleaning its antlers on a large Persian rug.

Instead of being tied to a single trend, such as the 2002 edition's focus on Internet art, this year's show has a few broad goals. The curators focused on young artists' interest in '60s culture and death metal gothic, and a revival of painting and drawing. Another theme is the flow of ideas from generation to generation.

Older artists such as David Hockney and Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama are featured alongside rising stars such as Julie Mehretu, Banks Violette and the collective Assume Vivid Astro Focus.

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