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BRUCE DESSAU



TV Review: Urban Myths – The Dali And The Cooper

By Bruce Dessau on 23/4/2018



Of all the Urban Myths episodes I've watched so far The Dali And The Cooper is probably the most filmic and easily the most trippy. Maybe not surprising as it was directed by Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard, who made the Nick Cave movie 20,000 Days On Earth and have also staged performance art events such as recreating David Bowie's famous Ziggy Stardust farewell gig. Surrealist Salvador Dali and snake-cuddling rocker Alice Cooper seem like the perfect subjects for them.

The film homes in on a brief but productive period in 1973 when Dali and Cooper spent two weeks in New York together. Dali wanted to create a unique piece of hologram art featuring Cooper – the plan was to include a sculpture of Cooper's brain with a creamy éclair running down the middle. As you do.

The cast is suitably inspired. Noel Fielding plays Cooper and certainly looks the black-clad part in lovely shaggy long hair and leather (I think it's where Claudia Winkleman got her look from). It is hard to upstage the wonderfully funny Fielding, who does a great bit of sexy swaggering here, but there are three further stand-out performances.

Firstly David Suchet, yes Poirot himself, plays another great curly-moustached figure, scarily dominating every scene he is in. In one memorable scenario he appears at the dining table, or rather *on* the dining table under a metal dome as if he is one of the courses.

Then there is Paul Kaye as Cooper's manager Shep Gordon, always hassling and hustling for money. The frizzy-haired Kaye looks here like a dead ringer for Sean Penn in Carlito's Way, but having googled a picture of Gordon he is also a dead ringer for Cooper's maverick manager. And finally there is Sheila Hancock as Dali's enduring muse-cum-manager Gala Dali, who is positively terrifying in her negotiations with Gordon.

The result is an extremely enjoyable episode thanks to four impeccable stars playing four big off-the-chart show-offs. It almost seems as if Fielding's Cooper is the most normal, which is hard to believe. There's a subtext here in Roger Drew and Ed Dyson's script about art versus money, but don't worry too much about that. Enjoy the score by Richard Hawley and Jarvis Cocker and surrender to the dazzling images such as a man with giant eggs for boxing gloves. Just don't watch it late at night like I did. It may make you have funny dreams.

Review: Urban Myths – The Dali And The Cooper, Sky Arts, Thursday, May 3, 9pm. All episodes of the series are available to Sky Subscribers now.

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