

Bjarne Melgaard

"A Weekend of Painting; A Novel by Les Super"

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 through January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Opening Reception; Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> 6-8 pm

Leo Koenig Inc is pleased to announce a solo exhibition entitled "A Weekend of Painting; A Novel by Les Super," by artist Bjarne Melgaard. Long known for outrageous installations involving elements from a decidedly underground sensibility ranging from hardcore heavy metal music to allusions to graphic S&M trysts, Bjarne Melgaard's work has matured with his re-discovery of the basics, painting and drawing. Not completely gone are the scatological narratives, and flippant humor of his past works, but gone is the compulsion to shock with the *ultra-violence* of confrontation.

Melgaards' angst-riddled constructions began as antithesis to the culture that surrounded him in good taste and minimalist aesthetics. Schooled in the Netherlands at the Jan van Eyck Academie, in Maastricht, and the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, Melgaard has been quoted as stating this time as the most miserable in his life. In his aesthetic "lashing out" he often offended, yet just as surely inspired minions of artists who also felt stifled by the fanaticism and over abundance of slick, finished-looking objects that flirted with decoration. Melgaard's work also evolved concurrently with contemporary transgressive literary writers such as Dennis Cooper, whose work involves passages of hardcore homosexual encounters and violence as a method to demonstrate an emphasis on difference, abnormality as opposed to the boredom of conformity. There is no interest in a collective identity whatsoever.

Enter Les Super, Melgaards "minipig" character. Pathetic, gross, yet lovable, and endearing, the creature begins a journey exploring life in a slightly subdued but equally moving way. It is a testament to Melgaard's artistic mutability, that he can easily shift from the extroverted, muscular visual onslaughts to the more introspective paintings that will be exhibited here. Venturing from pure abstraction to expressive narratives involving Les Super, the works guide the viewer through a story of transformation that resonates on many levels at once. The paintings are in fact a gorgeous confluence of painting skill and newly discovered tenderness. Reminders of the past continue to insinuate themselves everywhere, sometimes appearing on t-shirt's, in other instances, the hesitant text surrounding Les Super like his own racing thoughts. These elements ever threaten to take the picture to another direction. They are there to tell us that Les Super is still defiant, not defeated, and always casting a watchful eye on the *Human Stain*.

Bjarne Melgaard has shown extensively in Europe as well as the US. Most recently, his work has been included in such exhibitions as Superstars: The Celebrity Factor, From Warhol to Madonna, Kunststahle Wien, Austria "In a Norwegian Wood,; Norwegian Art of the Last Decade at the Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Poland and "Playlist" at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. Bjarne Melgaard lives and works in Barcelona Spain.

**For further information and/or visuals, please contact Elizabeth Balogh or Kai Heinze at the gallery.**