

**LEO KOENIG INC.**

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*For Immediate Release:*

**Jonathan Meese**

**"Dr. No's Son" May 10 through June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

**Opening-Lecture Monday May 10<sup>th</sup> 12-6 pm**

Leo Koenig Inc. is delighted to present new works by **Jonathan Meese** in an exhibition entitled "Dr. No's Son". With this show, Meese continues to mine the themes that he has been obsessed with since the inception of his career. At the core of his work remains an unrelenting sense of history, with a particular eye towards the more notorious or tragic figures. Visual passages hint of the biblical and the apocalyptic. In the past, visages of Nero, Imhotep, Caligula, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, have all made appearances. And here, once again historical and mythical personages coexist with/through Meese's self-portraits. Echnaton, the Egyptian ruler that established monotheism in Egypt only to be labeled a heretic by following generations, looms. The mythical city brimming with gold, Eldorado is presented as eternal temptation/damnation. And interspersed with his channeled self-portraits, are a surprising addition, portraits of Jonathan's own mother as well as two abstracted/figurative bronze sculptures.

By titling the show "Dr. No's Son", Meese directs us back to ideas that appeared in his earlier installations. In his room sized installations, walls were completely papered with pop-culture icons, and movie posters were a significant medium of choice to convey this visual iconography. The reference to the James Bond film may be only a hint to what Mr. Meese is up to. For instance, it has been said of the film that there were girls & gadgets galore, but there was really no formula. Sean Connery was not the first choice of either the director or the writer, and Ursula Andress, though cast as soon as she appeared, had all of her lines dubbed by another actress because the director thought that her thick accent would be incomprehensible. Yet these unforeseen variables begat the most successful serial of movies in history.

So too, Meese lacks a "formula" per se. In these works, Meese, as the Son of Dr. No, has been developing his own pop-cultural, historical, mythological, and very personal lineage. In essence, Meese performs a genetic splicing of these antecedents to create a hybrid of his own that conveys alternating, even opposing meanings. And by incorporating the frothy nod to absurdity in the character of Dr. No, Meese's work is saved from appearing too heavy or morose. In fact, it is impossible to categorize Jonathan Meese's work to any predefined style. In 1962, the curator Harald Szeeman coined the term "Individual Mythologies" to describe artists whose work is seen as a process of existential self-discovery and seek to avoid all forms of classification and pigeon-holing. This term seems to apply to Meese's work perfectly.

Jonathan Meese has most recently had solo exhibitions at Schirn Kunststahlale, ("The Plantation of Dr. No"), the Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover ("Revolution") and the Kunstwerke Berlin. His work has also been included in such prestigious exhibitions as "Junge Szene" in Seccession, Wien, "Generation Z" at PS 1 and the Berlin Bienial (in 1998) and his work has also been included in the Saatchi Collection. Mr. Meese exhibits regularly at CFA, Berlin, Paolo Curti, Milan and Modern Art, London. Jonathan Meese lives and works in Berlin. For more information or visuals, please contact Elizabeth Balogh or Kai Heinze at the gallery.