

After 2006 Galerie Guido W. Baudach is now delighted to present its second solo exhibition focussing on the Norwegian artist Bjarne Melgaard. Born in 1967 and now living in New York the artist has been causing a stir since the early 90s with his complex spatial collages and exhibition stagings. In his works he blends sub-cultural phenomena with high culture and art history; non art-related things with the classical media of painting, drawing and sculpture; personal experiences with constructs of abstract identity; the glamour of a fetishized culture of consumption and luxury with the existential abyss of brutal reality. Not infrequently here expectations are smashed and normative boundaries, be they content, form or aesthetics-based, are crossed. Bjarne Melgaard moves at polarised extremes - and brings these together. Uncompromisingly he appropriates things, transfers them into new contexts and thus radically creates an independent artistic *modus operandi*.

In the exhibition *A Kidwhore in Manhattan - A Novel* Melgaard presents an imposing installation consisting of paintings, drawings, photographs, videos, neon poems as well as furniture design classics. At the same time he tells a fragmented story of a young male prostitute whose role he himself at times even seems to adopt. Chaos, violence and excess, injuries and dependencies as well as emotional ambiguity emerge here as constantly recurring motifs at different stages of the novel.

The large-format, expressive paintings dominate the walls of the gallery and depict familiar figures from Melgaard's work which could also be interpreted as self-portraits: the Cockmonster constantly controlled by its sexual urges and the Chihuahua generally conveying a deep sadness and vulnerability. Thick black lines outline the characters overlapping with raven-black words from diary-like passages of text or letters that tell the fragmentary story of a mistreated body. In the same way as Melgaard describes radical body images and existential problems of human relationships, he himself also deals with the medium of painting: revealing here its full potency and materiality. Running throughout the exhibition and making the text and figures hard to discern, the monochrome paintings soften this directness of form: they take on more the appearance of dream-like and subconscious sequences.

The gallery space features modern tables by Paolo Piva and seating that was designed by Friedrich Kiesler and covered with fabric designed by Melgaard. These include *Bed Couch*, *Correalistic Rocker* and *Correalistic Instrument*. The latter emerge out of the gallery floor in different positions like sculptures. The correalistic furniture is arranged around the tables upon which numerous Chihuahua drawings and homoerotic photographs - sometimes bordering on paedophilia - are apparently randomly scattered and brutally pinned to the tabletop with scalpels. The video, the photographs and drawings that are picked up on in the fabric design and in the neon poems ("If you wanna rape me don't make it feel like a disappointment" [sic!] / "The world is full of rich corrupted

cunts") only take on their full meaning within the context of the entire exhibition thereby feeding ever new fragmentary elements into a story that never wishes to end.

Some group exhibitions Bjarne Melgaard has taken part in: Paul Thek - In the context of today's contemporary art, ZKM, Karlsruhe / Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg (2007/2008), Euro-Centric. Part 1, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2007), Beneath the Underdog, Gagosian Gallery, Madison Avenue, New York (2007), PLAYLIST, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2004).

Some institutions and galleries that have hosted his solo exhibitions: Greene Naftali Gallery, New York (2008), Hallo Maybe, Haugar Vestfold Museum, Oslo (2005), Scam, Bergen Kunsthall (2003), Black Low, MARTa Herford (2002).

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